FROM IRENAEUS TO GROTIUS

A Sourcebook in Christian Political Thought
100–1625

Edited by

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Augustine of Hippo
(356-430)

Like a mountain that assumes different shapes when seen from different angles yet always dominates the landscape, Augustine towers over the development of Christian political thought in the West, as he towers over so much else. Only Aquinas and Luther can claim anything like comparable influence, and theirs, though profound, has weighed mainly upon schools of thought derived from them, while Augustine's has been much more widely diffused. To the medieval scholastics he was an authority one could not afford to be in open conflict with, an ever present thesis to which the revival of Aristotle was the antithesis. Most confident of his support were those who proclaimed papal preeminence over secular authority. In the Reformation, however, it was not the papalists who seized on Augustine as their own, but the Reformers, who welcomed the privileging of love over law, motive over form, divine inscrutability over human custom, very much in support of secular, innovative, and authoritarian political trends. Yet in the twentieth century, again, it has been "liberals" and "realists," those who repudiate the illusions of idealism in politics, who have seen in Augustine a natural master of suspicion, stripping away the finery with which the crude struggle for power tends to disguise itself. And these very different appeals to his authority have all, in a measure, been right. Diverse as their interests were, we can trace a common thread which held the different "political Augustinianisms" together: a disinterest, we may say, in the worldly political surface, in autonomous constitutional proprieties; an eye for God's intervening direction and judgment of secular events; a due respect for agents who respond immediately to the divine command.

It is sometimes doubted that Augustine meant to write or think about politics at all. And that doubt, too, is right — if by "politics" we mean, quite strictly, the self-justifying debates about forms, procedures, and constitutions, insulated against first and last things. Yet such a definitional defense against Augustine is surely self-defeating. It would be a starved, statistical science that ruled inadmissible these

probings of society and justice, on purely procedural grounds! Augustine began as a Christian Platonist, the intellectual tradition into which he was converted during his years as a young orator in Milan. The Platonism of his day was both introspective and pan-cosmic; it moved ambitiously and confidently between the soul and the universe, following an absorbing and demanding discipline of psychological self-interrogation and metaphysical philosophy. But it bypassed society, which lay "outside" — outside the self, that is, but also outside the real universe; it was a shimmering, illusory realm of self-deception, characterized by passionate violence practiced upon and within the soul. There is no reason why Augustine should not have fulfilled his role as a theologian wholly within the terms of this satisfying and absorbing tradition, as some of his greatest contemporaries did. His genius as a political theologian was to pour into this unpromising matrix a dense weave of social observation and awareness which he garnered from his role as a bishop in North Africa, so creating a Christian social theory out of the theology and self-understanding of the church.

The greatest work of his maturity, the massive *City of God: Against the Pagans (De civitate Dei)*, represents the peak of this achievement, offering a panoptic view of history, society, and cultural conflict that has scarcely an equivalent in literature. Inevitably it is here that one looks for Augustine's most developed political ideas; and every collector of excerpts has to wrestle with how much of this work cannot on any account be omitted. There is no escape from reproducing certain much-overexcerpted pages — though we have tried to turn this situation to advantage by correcting some stubborn errors ingrained in the translation tradition. But when one goes beyond the *City of God*, one can no longer escape noticing some complex crosscurrents in his thought which are, actually, also to be found in the large work. Interpreters usually remark upon the "tensions," of which the most striking for modern readers is between the "value-neutral" political order seemingly encountered in *City of God* 19 and the theocratic logic apparently deployed in defense of the coercion of Donatist heretics (in *Epistle* 93 and elsewhere). To come to grips with Augustine's thought requires us to take the measure of these tensions and explore their resolution.

"Development" has been a key to much Augustine interpretation of the past century. Those who have written on his political thought have been slower than others to take it up, but we can be grateful to the few, most notably R. A. Markus, who have shown us how illuminating it can be. It is essential to read Augustine with a sense of the chronology of his writing, even though chronology alone is not a sufficient guide to his developing ideas. But context is required, too, since, like most of us, he thought freshly in response to fresh challenges, conventionally in response to familiar ones. Yet Augustine's development is something very much more than simple change of mind. There is, as it were, a slow accretion of new layers to his thought. At points of new departure he will reorganize the way he approaches a question, while still carrying forward the observations and conclusions that he has made at earlier stages. We do not find constant innovation; it is something more like regeneration, as the familiar keeps coming back to make new and unfamiliar effects.

So one could say that the earliest of the excerpts here, the brief section from

On Free Will (*De libero arbitrio* [388]), contains the seed-thought that will flower most impressively in the *City of God:* political order is a necessary *moral mediation* between the virtue of those whose hearts are fixed on the highest and eternal good and the "lust" (i.e., disordered ambition) of those who surround them. The only order that matters ultimately is that of the divine law, claiming our love exclusively for goods which cannot in any circumstances be lost. Yet the mediation is a good thing, though the lust which makes it necessary is not. The example: it is right for the law to permit forcible self-defense, though it is not right to practice it. This prepares the way for a theory of just war which will altogether do without an appeal to "legitimate defense."

The next stage sees this straightforward Platonic distinction between divine law and the "law of the city" refracted through the prism of the church's controversy with the Manichean heresy. This we view through excerpts from the long polemical work *Against Faustus* (*Contra Faustum* [397]). The issue was the status of the Old Testament, and it turned especially on the Manicheans' objections to the unsatisfactory moral character of Old Testament law compared with Christ's teaching. Augustine had to articulate an account of Old Testament law which admitted the differences while refusing the inference that the law had simply been discarded. He did this by turning the Platonic distinction on its side, so to speak, into an account of the phases of salvation history. Removing from discussion, first of all, the purely cultural and ritual features of Old Testament law by means of an older distinction between "moral" law and "typical sacraments" performing a symbolic role now superseded, he focuses on the *different moral functions* of the old and the new laws, as follows: the one set minimal restraints, the other carried forward the moral pedagogy to its maximal expression, the law of love. They serve the same moral end in different ways.

Does this formulation admit of moral progress from the old Mosaic order to the new Christian one? The extent, and perhaps ambivalence, of Augustine's doctrine of progress is one of the most fascinating and difficult questions that we can put to him. At this point in his development there is at least a *pedagogical* progress: the age of Christlike perfection is now possible because the Mosaic order succeeded in curbing the worst bestialities of human appetite. Yet does that mean that things formerly conceded are not now conceded? If God could ordain war in the era of Joshua, does it not follow that in the era of perfection, when Christ's teaching was exemplified in the sacrifices of the Christian martyrs, God would no longer do so? No, it does not follow. There is a change in what is allowed, certainly, but it is purely attitudinal. The law of Christ can be obeyed in the practice of war if the right attitude to it is sustained. Obedient and responsible war, conducted with just cause, remains an open possibility within the sphere of political order, as is demonstrated by the "splendid victories over ungodly enemies" with which God has crowned Christian emperors. The question whether a change of method or style is required by Christian war-making has not yet been raised, but it will follow. The emperors, then, are to sustain a Mosaic discipline in a way compatible with the Christian era, themselves winning victories of one kind, while the martyrs win victories of another, superior kind. (Augustine thought the possibility of martyrdom was always present even in the Christian empire: "Nobody should say — it would be a great self-

deception — nobody should say that the church does not suffer persecution now that the emperors are catholic, take decisions for the church and watch over its growth, knowing they must give account to God. Nobody should say that the church does not suffer persecution. The lion may be harmless, but the dragon is unsleeping!" [*Sermon* M5, from the newly discovered Mainz manuscript published by Dolbeau].)

We are now in a position to view Augustine's mature treatment of the responsibilities of political office in the Christian era, which we do mainly through a text which comes from the second decade of the fifth century (414). It is a letter to the provincial governor of Africa, Macedonius (*Letter* 153), in response to a courteous but menacing challenge to the bishops' traditional practice of interceding for condemned prisoners. Augustine's letter paints with the richest palette the argument for a distinctively Christian manner of conducting civil justice in dialogue with the pastoral authorities of the church. The secular magistrate is drawn wholly into the church's discourse on divine mercy and forgiveness of sins. For Augustine (in contrast to what we shall find in some later Augustinians, notably Luther) there is no other context within which his task can be described. The pursuit of penitence is the church's sole authentic weapon against human sin, and it must use that weapon with a patience that emulates the patience of God. Divine patience exceeds, Augustine admits, even the traditional practice of the church that allowed just one opportunity for a formal act of penance after grave sin. There is a second motive at work besides the imitation of God: those who deal with the sins of others must know they are sinners themselves, wholly dependent on God's mercy. Augustine touches on the story of the woman taken in adultery (John 8:2-11), in which, he claims, Jesus himself took on the role of intercessor before the judges. A good judge must heed such a plea, because — and here Luther is not far distant — he knows he himself is at one and the same time good (with Christ's goodness) and evil, daily asking for his sins to be forgiven. The tendency of the story in Augustine's hands is to subvert the distinction between good and evil people, leveling them through their uniform need of forgiveness. This is the period at which the polemic against Pelagian perfectionism is in his mind, and he cannot resist the deep theological themes of grace and merit.

What, then, does the civil magistrate contribute? He contributes "terror," ensuring a social stability within which "the good can live more peaceably amidst the evil." The magistrate performs the same role for the church as Old Testament law does for the gospel. Not every way of sparing sinners is true mercy; without the terror of the law the pastoral force of mercy is lost sight of; the whole exercise loses its redemptive energy. Civil justice, then, prepares the way for penitence; but for that very reason it should not go to the extreme of taking life. Augustine all but makes the abolition of the death penalty an absolute demand, but does not feel he has sufficiently firm ground beneath his feet to do so. He is convinced, however, that any measure, severe or lenient, must be susceptible of justification within the terms of Christ's law of love.

Might the wholesome dialectic of terror and mercy simply collapse if pastoral authorities were too insistent and magistrates too obliging? Might the essential function of deterrence be left with too little support in actual practice? Underestimating,

perhaps, the logic of Macedonius's difficulty, Augustine does not face these questions, which will continue to accompany the search for a "merciful justice" through the centuries. His letter turns to the duty of reparation as a measure of true penitence, not missing the occasion for some sharp thrusts at the venality of lawyers, and to a statement of his distinctive view of property, pregnant with future development in the Middle Ages: ideally only the righteous have true title of possession (see pp. 368-70, 387, and 488-98 below). It concludes with his recurrent motif that civil justice is a state of toleration, merely securing the minimal conditions for society until the true justice of heaven is attained.

Reflecting on the doctrine of civil punishment which we meet here, we can only be struck by the all-importance of the pedagogical motif. Altogether lacking, it appears, is any sense of equivalence or consistency. Civil punishment, when subject to the pastoral discernment of the church authorities, displays a humane face, yet a disturbingly arbitrary one. It is absolutely just that we who sin should suffer punishment. But it is quite indefinite how much. If sin is, in principle, infinite, just punishment may be anything at all; and if, as Augustine believes, the most painful punishment short of the pains of hell is that to which the offender freely submits by searching his or her own conscience, how can we measure the fitness of any other penal action, save by its likelihood of evoking that one?

To this context belongs the policy toward heretics. Every aspect of Augustine's doctrine of punishment seems, indeed, to have been shaped by his long struggle with the Donatists, the civil authorities, and indeed his own conscience over the official response to this assertive and independent Christian movement. Undoubtedly his determined dislike of the death penalty, though generally shared in the church of his day, was sharpened by the sense that something essential to the church's integrity would be lost if the truth of the gospel were upheld against heretics by bloodshed; the violent suppression of paganism did not touch him so nearly. This scruple survived, strengthened, after the change of mind described in *Letter* 93, written in 408 to one Vincentius, bishop of a dissenting Donatist subgroup. He had abandoned the view that only unaided argument and pleading were serviceable to the conversion of sinners, and now defended the church's reliance on civil power, on the grounds that the Christian emperors should assist the church's task of reclaiming the wandering. The whole case could have been argued quite plausibly as a question of civil disorder, which was clearly within the competence of the secular authority to suppress, but Augustine does not take this route. Here, too, in defense of the confiscations with which the authorities pursued the heretics, we see something of his doctrine of property, not the idealist side that was in evidence before but the positivist side: if in ultimate terms all wealth belongs by right to the righteous, in the provisional order property right is determined solely by civil government.

Augustine's brief but widely influential observations on just war come directly out of the same context. The letter to Count Boniface (*Letter* 189, from 418), though theoretically undeveloped, brings together the same elements: war is justified solely on the basis of the love we owe our neighbors; it is a form of service secondary to prayer; it is made necessary by the persistence of discord and diabolical deceit until the end of history. Augustine has not ceased to think of this age as one that demands

"tolerance" of evil; here, however, the inference is not, as one might anticipate, opposition to military undertakings, but a warning against an idealistic spirit of withdrawal, too weary or impatient of the burdens of maintaining order. Finally, as in the practice of civil justice, love and the desire for peace imprint the policies of the Christian war-maker with a distinctive restraint and mercy.

One further sphere of interaction between church and civil authority invites our notice: slavery, to which two of the letters recently discovered by J. Divjak are devoted, though in practical rather than theoretical terms. In one of them, not reproduced here, Augustine pleads with some urgency for forceful civil action to suppress a sudden burgeoning of the international slave trade fed by indiscriminate kidnapping. Even in this extreme case, though, he is wary of too heavy-handed a response. His church is deeply involved in the expensive business of buying back the victims of this cruel enterprise, and if the kidnappers end up being flogged to death by the authorities, the church, he thinks, will lose its zest for this charitable work. *Letter* 24* (for which no date has been proposed) shows the bishop in his role as judge, and offers a fascinating view of how Roman civil law entered Christian practice. Augustine seeks counsel's opinion on some points of law concerning slavery. The matter before him is the status of the children of someone who occupied a managerial position confined in law to slaves, though he was not himself a slave. The bishop is obliged to conform to "earthly laws" in determining such questions; yet, like many who take counsel's advice, he makes it clear what advice he hopes to receive. It does not lie within his province to release slaves, but neither is he prepared to acquiesce in any extension of the reach of slavery.

Here, then, is the working doctrine of civil authority which Augustine propounded and by which he governed his practice. Nothing suggests that he felt any discontent with it. Yet it is clear that a new paradigm comes into play with the writing of the *City of God* in the years between 411 and 426. What is new is a concern to look behind the tasks of *authority* to the *society* which gives authority its rationale. The cozy collaboration of Christian governor and Christian bishop, which was Augustine's practical ideal, suddenly turns out to span a huge gulf between two societies which, though they exist together in the same space, intermingle and interact, are constituted on radically contradictory principles, the love of God and the love of self. Always, of course, the law of the city had presupposed the divine law, which was summed up in the love of God. Now, however, there is an alternative to the love of God, a rival center to the affections. It is not real or enduring, but is able to conjure up an astounding appearance of reality: it is expressed in a history of world empire. Opposed to it, the city of God has its own history, a history of prophecy, of Christ, and of martyrdom. But not, we notice, a history of bishops. Augustine was far from taking the step which Gelasius I would take (see p. 179 below), of positing the pope as the emperor's opposite number.

His inspiration for this move was the need to mount an apologetic of a very different kind from that to which he was accustomed: not against another heretical splinter group, but against an embittered, cultured, and anti-Christian pagan revival which had exported itself from its native Italy among refugees who fled before Alaric's conquest of Rome in 410. This forced Augustine to turn his gaze on the cul-

tural and social reality of the history of Rome. The first five books of the *City of God*, the emotional heart of the work, are devoted to the deconstruction, at once loving and despairing, of the great Roman myth. Here he confronts a long-sustained political society, militant, acquisitive, and culturally expansive. What is he to make of it? What he actually makes of it has inebriated some readers and shocked others. It had no *real* civil order at all; it was a kind of pretense, a consumer society existing by consensus at the lowest, most self-indulgent level, compensating for its lack of true authority by the sheer exercise of power and arbitrary will (2.20ff.). He can claim support from enemy witnesses: Cicero and Sallust, in the last generation of the republic, had deplored the disintegration that they saw around them. What they failed to see was that Rome had always been like that. The ideal of a Rome grown great by virtue, held together by law, was never real. There had never been a Roman "commonwealth" *(respublica)* — not in the sense that that word *ought* to bear. There never were Roman virtues, only "good disciplines" *(boni mores)* devoted to self-serving ends. There never was Roman law, since legal "right flows from the source of rightness" (19.21). To those who charge him with engaging in mere wordplay, Augustine can reply with some justice that he is simply taking the Roman self-image seriously. That image can be worn only by a society which finds its common good in God — that is, by the church; not by the Christian Roman Empire, for Rome's continuity counts for more than its conversion, and Rome, now as formerly, embodies the earthly city. If civil authority derives its rationale from the restraint of evil, it belongs to the world where evil belongs. So Constantine, Gratian, and Theodosius, about whose Christian characters some fine, even cloying things are said, still take their places as Romans in book 5. Augustine has come a long way round to end up with a view of the Christian emperors not far removed from that of Ambrose.

On the one hand those features which give social order a reality are found in the city of God alone. On the other, actual political societies belong to the earthly city. "Cain founded a city, not Abel." (Notice how Augustine deals with the political society of ancient Israel in 15.2. David himself enters the history of the city of God as a prophet, not as a king; cf. 17.1.) Has the ideal-real split apart from the actual? No: they are held together by analogy, which allows Augustine to acknowledge derivative, shadowy reflections of true order in the actual political societies of history. Of course Rome was a "commonwealth" — in the more common and less idealized sense! And so, too, was the rebel slave-kingdom of Spartacus (4.5)? If Rome is invited to see its reflection in this spontaneous association of the violent and underprivileged, can such associations see their reflection in Rome? This hint is developed in the long twelfth chapter of book 19, where Augustine explores the multiple and analogous forms of peace, and the political payoff is seen in chapter 24, where he triumphantly returns to the paradox left hanging in book 2 and propounds his new definition of a commonwealth, avoiding the term "right" *(ius)*. This is one source of that interpretation of Augustine's aims which sees him as propounding a "value-neutral" state. But, of course, this alternative conception is not value-neutral in any sense that late-modern liberalism could acknowledge. The "things they love" which form the focus of the commonwealth are, in the end, themselves. It is a despite of God, devilish and destructive. The shadowy, doubtful reality of earthly political order matches the shadowy, doubtful reality of the evil will itself: immensely strong on the stage of history, generating vast cultural achievements at the price of yet vaster miseries, but when set in the light of the first and last things, null and empty.

The excerpts we have included from the *City of God*, inevitably fragmentary given the huge scale of the work, fall into three groups. From books 2, 4, and 5 come illustrations of the critique of Rome and the praise of Christian emperors; from 15 (with a useful summary from the end of book 14) comes an outline of the theory of the two cities and their histories; finally, the extended central section and the concluding section of book 19 are in many ways the true climax of the great work.

This book introduces the last four (bks. 19-22), devoted to the last things: judgment, hell, and heaven. It treats of the "ultimate states" of the two cities, i.e., their "goals" or "destinies" — the word *finis* contains the idea of purpose and fulfillment. The topic *de finibus* was an accepted one in classical literature for basic moral theory, which allows Augustine to begin with a review, not included here, of pagan moral theories, treating a pedantic textbook presentation from a now lost text of Varro (saec. A.D. 1) with a mixture of irreverence and respect. Varro had posed the alternatives in terms of how "the wise man" should seek to be "happy," and Augustine's strategy is to accept these terms for the discussion, building a bridge from the moral goal to the eschatological, and from the individual quest for happiness to the social; to show, in other words, that there can be no intelligible human action save as participation in a society which has set its heart on eternal goods not realized within this "wretched" mortal existence.

For Varro the question of social context was a secondary one. But Augustine seizes on it, devoting the greater part of the book (chs. 5-17) to it. He constantly reverts to the impossibility of any individual "wise man" resolving the problems of society by withdrawing into solitary pursuit of his own happiness. Certainly Christians understand the good as social! But everything depends on whether one's hopes are pinned on society as we experience it or on the real society promised us at the end of history. There follows a series of vignettes of social life at different levels, full of interest in themselves: household, city, world — and universe, for spiritual communications with angels and demons are as fully determinative of a society as any other (chs. 5-9). The observations on the dilemmas of a judge and on the difficulties of maintaining friendships at a distance are especially memorable. They are all handled in a pessimistic tone — here is the "realist" Augustine with a vengeance! — but only to prepare the way for the affirmation of a real "peace" which has the essential element of being eternal (ch. 11).

This point achieved, Augustine can look back upon actual political phenomena with a more hopeful eye, using the analogy of peace to interpret even the most unpromising — wars, robber bands, even solitary predators — as instances of a general law that everything seeks a stable peace. He does not select these in order to decry more substantial cultural achievements; rather, he wants to look at the achievements together with the underside of our social experience, and to find one and the same law of equilibrium operating at every degree of sociality, great or small. He is now ready to embark upon the densest and most fascinating section of the book, the description of how the city of God exists on pilgrimage, seeking its own peace

amidst the peace of the earthly city (chs. 13-17). A pyramidal reconstruction, level by level, of the peace in which human beings as such participate culminates in a society where each member cares before all else for the others' love of God (ch. 14). How does this idea operate at the first level of society, the household? The answer is unexpected: it transforms the command-obedience structure so as to restore the primitive equality in which mankind was created. Here he embarks on his deepest exploration of slavery: its presence in the world is a response to sin; it is not a natural feature; it exists in many forms, of which Augustine, like Ambrose (cf. pp. 79-82), thinks moral impotence is by far the most terrible. Within the righteous household, which values eternal goods over temporal goods, the operation of neighbor-love subverts distinctions with the equalizing force of the phrase *sicut teipsum*, "as yourself." The slave by his freely given loyalty and the master by his untiring care can establish a pattern of relations that cuts across the grain of the apparent structure of domination and subjection. The outward form of the household is the same; the underlying reality is changed (chs. 15, 16).

But the household is a paradigm for the larger unit, the city (ch. 17). The heavenly city, making use of the same material resources, makes use also of the same social laws and structures that protect them; yet the transcendent end it serves means that their purport is quite different. This celebrated passage has sometimes been taken as a charter for an instrumental, value-free public space. But for Augustine the earthly city is never value-free. It is materialist and idolatrous in a decisive sense, so that the two cities are religiously incompatible, the threat of conflict never absent. (Some excerpters dare to omit this decisive paragraph!) Yet — and here is Augustine's last word on how a Christian can be a public servant — the church supports even this earthly peace, not in its idolatrous and materialist aspects, but simply *as* a peace which will assist the heavenly city in the course of its journey home.

City of God leaves us with questions on two fronts: about how this broad perspective, at once determinist and relativist, marries with the more practical political one of his other writings; and about the character of the undertaking as a whole. Has Augustine any place for a correction and transformation of the laws and conventions of the earthly city under the impact of Christian love for God and neighbor? From elsewhere we know that he has, but from this work one would hardly know it. Has he a doctrine of civilizational progress? In the *City of God* progress is swallowed up into pilgrimage; elsewhere, again, we have found indications of one. What, then, is the point of this great step backward from the arts of practical and political faith, setting the tasks of political service to one side and contemplating ultimate social goals and destinies? Is it to reassert, as one recent commentator has suggested, that Christian faith is, after all, "transpolitical"? Yes, certainly; but it is only transpolitical *as it is social.* It is the deep groundswell of social cohesion, the corporately felt commitments and unarticulated common impulses that really determine the character of communities. These make the rational plans and conscientious judgments of their leaders look like waves on the surface of the ocean. Augustine's last and greatest word is a warning not to ignore the currents of the depths. Needless to say, *sociology* for him could only be *theology.* If we once dare to ask what lies *behind* politics and its justice, we must find ourselves face-to-face with heaven and hell.

Further Reading: P. R. L. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (London: Faber, 1967); P. R. L. Brown, *Religion and Society in the Age of St. Augustine* (London: Faber, 1972); H. Chadwick, *Augustine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986); G. Combès, *La doctrine politique de S. Augustin* (Paris: Plon, 1927); J. B. Elshtain, *Augustine and the Limits of Politics* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997); J. N. Figgis, *The Political Aspects of St. Augustine's "City of God"* (London: Longmans, 1921); E. Fortin, *Political Idealism and Christianity in the Thought of St. Augustine* (Villanova: Villanova University Press, 1942); G. Madec, *La patrie et la voie* (Paris: Desclée, 1989); F. G. Maier, *Augustin und das Antike Rom* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1955); R. A. Markus, *Saeculum: Religion and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970); R. A. Markus, *Sacred and Secular* (London: Variorum, 1994); R. A. Markus, ed., *Augustine: A Collection of Critical Essays* (New York: Doubleday, 1972); H. I. Marrou, *L'Ambivalence du Temps de l'histoire chez S. Augustin* (Montréal: Institut d'études mediévales, 1950); G. O'Daly, *Augustine's 'City of God': A Reader's Guide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); J. Rist, *Augustine: Ancient Thought Baptised* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); M. Ruokanen, *Theology and Social Life in Augustine's "De Civitate Dei"* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993); J. Van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon: A Study of Augustine's "City of God" and the Sources of His Doctrine of the Two Cities* (Leiden: Brill, 1991).

From *On Free Choice of the Will,* Book 1

5. *Augustine:* First we ought to discuss, I think, whether there is any lust in the case where an attacking enemy or an assassin in ambush is killed for the sake of life, liberty, or chastity.

Evodius: How can I think that men lack lust who fight for the things that they can lose against their will? Or, if they cannot lose these things, what need is there to go as far as murdering a man for them?

A: Therefore the law is not just which grants a traveller the power to kill a highway robber so that he himself may not be killed; or which grants a man or woman the right to slay, if they can, an assailant before he can do violence. Indeed, the law even commands a soldier to kill the enemy, and if the soldier refrains from the slaughter, he is punished by his commander. We shall not, shall we, dare say that these laws are unjust — or rather, are not laws at all, for I think that a law that is not just is not a law.

E: Surely, I think that a law is quite safe from this accusation if it permits the people it rules to do lesser evils so as to avoid greater ones. It is much better that the man who plots against another's life be killed than the man who is defending his life. It is also much worse for an innocent person to be violated than for the assailant to be killed by the person whom he tried to attack. Indeed, in killing the enemy, the soldier is the agent of the law. Thus he merely fulfils his duty without any trace of lust. Furthermore, the law which has been passed to protect the people cannot itself be accused of lust. Surely the man who passed it — if he did so at God's command, that is, if the law is what eternal justice commands — can do so without any lust whatso-

ever. And even if he did make the law out of some kind of lust, it does not follow from this that one's obedience to the law is tainted with lust, since a good law can be made by an evil man.

If a man seizes tyrannical power, for example, and accepts a bribe from some interested person to pass a law that no one may take a woman by force, even for marriage, this law will not be evil, though the man who made it was unjust and corrupt. Therefore it is possible to obey without lust the law ordering that an enemy's violence be repulsed with equal violence for the protection of the citizens. The same thing can be said in regard to all the officials who, for the sake of law and order, are subject to any authority. But even though the law is blameless, I do not understand how these men can be, when the law does not force them to kill, but leaves it to their power. They are free not to kill anyone for those things which they can lose against their will, and which they ought not therefore to love.

Concerning life, perhaps there is some question whether or not it can be taken in any way from the soul when the body is slain. But if life can be taken away, then it is to be despised. If life cannot be taken away, then there is nothing to fear.

As to chastity, who indeed would doubt that it is fixed in the spirit itself, since it is a virtue? Hence, not even chastity can be taken away by a violent assailant. Therefore, whatever he who is killed was about to take away is not at all in our power; so that I do not understand how it can be called our own. Thus I do not blame the law which permits such aggressors to be slain; yet I do not know how I would defend the man who kills.

A: Much less can I discover why you should seek to defend men whom no law holds to be guilty.

E: No public, man-made law, perhaps; still, I do not know whether they are not held guilty by some stronger, very secret law, if all things are governed by divine providence. How then, before divine providence, are these men free of sin when they are stained by human blood for the sake of things they ought to despise? I think, therefore, that the law that is written to rule the people is right to permit these acts, while divine providence punishes them. The law of the people deals with acts it must punish in order to keep peace among ignorant men, insofar as deeds can be governed by man; these other sins have other suitable punishments, from which, I think, only wisdom can free us.

A: I praise and approve this distinction that you have made. It is incomplete and imperfect; nevertheless it is full of faith, and aims at the sublime. The law which is made to govern states seems to you to make many concessions and to leave unpunished things which are avenged nonetheless by divine providence — and rightly so. But because it does not do all things, it does not thereby follow that what it does do is to be condemned.

Translation: Anna S. Benjamin and L. H. Hackstaff (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964). Used with permission.

From *Against Faustus*, Book 19

18. The Manichaeans, therefore, have no ground for saying, in disparagement of the law and the prophets, that Christ came to abolish rather than to fulfil them (*cf.* Matt. 5:17), because Christians do not observe what is there enjoined; for the only things which they do not observe are those that prefigured Christ, and these are not observed because their fulfilment is in Christ and what is fulfilled is no longer prefigured, the typical observances having properly come to a close in the time of those who, after being trained in such things, had come to believe in Christ as their fulfilment. Do not Christians observe the precept of Scripture, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one God" (Deut. 6:4), "Thou shalt not make unto thee an image," and so on? Do Christians not observe the precept, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain"? Do Christians not observe the Sabbath, which belongs to the comprehension of the true rest? Do Christians not honour their parents, according to the commandment? Do Christians not abstain from fornication and murder and theft and false witness, from coveting their neighbour's wife and from coveting his property — all of which things are written in the law (Exod. 20:1-17)? These moral precepts are distinct from typical sacraments; the former are fulfilled by the aid of divine grace, the latter by the accomplishment of what they promise. Both are fulfilled in Christ, who has ever been the bestower of this grace which is also now revealed in him, and who now makes manifest the accomplishment of what he in former times promised; for "the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). Again, these things which concern the keeping of a good conscience are fulfilled in the faith which worketh by love; while types of the future pass away when they are accomplished. But even the types are not abolished, but fulfilled; for Christ, in bringing to light what the types signified, does not prove them vain or illusory. **19.** Faustus, therefore, is wrong in supposing that the Lord Jesus fulfilled some precepts of righteous men who lived before the law of Moses, such as "Thou shalt not kill," which Christ did not oppose but rather confirmed by his prohibition of anger and abuse, and that he abolished some things apparently peculiar to the Hebrew law, such as "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," which Christ seems rather to abrogate than to confirm when he says, "But I say unto you that ye resist not evil; but if any one smite thee on the right cheek turn to him the other also," and so on (Matt. 5:38f.). But we say that even these things which Faustus thinks Christ abolished by enjoining the opposite were suitable to the times of the Old Testament, and were not destroyed but fulfilled by Christ. [. . .]

25. Nor, again, is there any opposition between that which was said by them of old time, "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," and what the Lord says: "But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil; but if any one smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also," and so on (Matt. 5:39). The old precept as well as the new is intended to check the vehemence of hatred, and to curb the impetuosity of angry passion. For who will of his own accord be satisfied with a vengeance equal to the injury? Do we not see men, only slightly hurt, eager for slaughter, thirsting for blood, as if they could never make their enemy suffer enough? If a man receives a blow, does he not summon his assailant, that he may be condemned in the court of law? Or if he

prefers to return the blow, does he not fall upon the man with hand and heel, or perhaps with a weapon, if he can get hold of one? To put a restraint upon a revenge so unjust from its excess, the law established the principle of compensation, that the penalty should correspond to the injury inflicted. So the precept, "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," instead of being a brand to kindle a fire that was quenched, was rather a covering to prevent the fire already kindled from spreading. For there is a just vengeance due to the injured person from his assailant, so that when we pardon, we give up what we might justly claim. Thus, in the Lord's prayer, we are taught to forgive others their debts that God may forgive us our debts. There is no injustice in asking back a debt, though there is a kindness in forgiving it. But as in swearing the one who swears, however truly, is in danger of perjury, of which one who never swears is in no danger; and as, while swearing truly is not a sin, we are further from sin by not swearing, so that the command not to swear is a guard against perjury; in the same way, since it is sinful to wish to be avenged with an unjust excess, though there is no sin in wishing for vengeance within the limits of justice, the man who wishes for no vengeance at all is further from the sin of an unjust vengeance. It is a sin to demand more than is due, though it is no sin to demand a debt. And the best security against the sin of an unjust demand is to demand nothing, especially considering that we might be compelled to pay our debt to him who is indebted to none.

So I could echo Faustus' words, and say: "'It has been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not take unjust revenge; but I say, Take no revenge at all.' *That* is fulfilment!" It is thus that Faustus, after quoting, "It has been said, Thou shalt not swear falsely; but I say unto you, swear not at all," adds: "*That* is fulfilment!" (I could have used the same expression, that is, if I thought that by the addition of these words Christ *supplied a defect* in the law, rather than that the law's *intention* to prevent unjust revenge is *best* secured by not taking revenge at all, as the intention to prevent perjury is best secured by not swearing at all.) For if "an eye for an eye" is opposed to "If any one smite thee on the cheek, turn to him the other also," is there not as much opposition between "Thou shalt perform unto the Lord thine oath" and "Swear not at all"? If Faustus thinks that it is not abolition but fulfilment in the one case, he ought to think the same in the other. For if "Swear not" is the fulfilment of "Swear truly," why should not "Take no revenge" be the fulfilment of "Take revenge justly"? So, according to my interpretation, there is in both cases a guard against sin, whether of false swearing or of unjust revenge; though, as regards giving up the right to vengeance, there is the additional consideration that, by forgiving such debts, we shall obtain the forgiveness of our debts. The old precept was required in the case of a self-willed people, to teach them not to be extravagant in their demands. Thus when rage, eager for unrestrained vengeance, was subdued, there would be leisure for any one so disposed to consider how desirable it would be to have his own debt cancelled by the Lord, and so to be led by this consideration to forgive the debt of his fellow-servant. [. . .]

26. But, to return to the point in hand: — If Christ, in adding the words "But I say unto you" to his quotation of ancient sayings, neither fulfilled the law of primitive times *by addition* nor abolished the law given by Moses with *opposing* precepts, but rather paid such deference to the Hebrew law in all his quotations as to make his

own remarks either an explanation of what the law had stated less distinctly, or a means of securing the design intended by the law, (27) you see how differently we should understand the words, "I came not to abolish the law, but to fulfil it": not as though a half-adequate law was supplemented by these precepts; but that what the literal command failed in doing from the pride and disobedience of men, is accomplished by grace in those who are brought to repentance and humility. The fulfilment is not in additional words, but in acts of obedience. So the apostle says, "Faith worketh by love," and again, "He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law" (Gal. 5:6; Rom. 13:8). This love, by which alone the righteousness of the law can be fulfilled, was publicly bestowed at Christ's coming through the Spirit sent according to his promise; and that is why he said: "I came not to abolish the law, but to fulfil it." This is the New Testament in which it is promised that this love will inherit the Kingdom of Heaven, a promise veiled in the Old Testament, suitably to the times of that dispensation, in symbols. So Christ says again, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another" (John 13:34).

From Book 22

74. What is the moral evil in war? Is it the death of some who will soon die in any case, that others may be subdued to a peaceful state in which life may flourish? This is mere cowardly dislike, not any religious feeling. The real evils in war are love of violence, revengeful cruelty, fierce and implacable enmity, wild resistance, and the lust of power, and such like; and it is generally to impose just punishment on them that, in obedience to God or some lawful authority, good men undertake wars against violent resistance, when they find themselves set in positions of responsibility which require them to command or execute actions of this kind. Otherwise John, when the soldiers who came to be baptized asked, "What shall we do?" would have replied: "Throw away your arms; give up the service; never strike, or wound, or disable any one." But knowing that such actions in battle were not murderous but authorised by law, and that the soldiers did not thus avenge themselves but defend the public safety, he replied: "Do violence to no man, accuse no man falsely, and be content with your wages" (Luke 3:14). But as the Manichaeans are in the habit of speaking evil of John, let them hear the Lord Jesus Christ himself ordering this money to be given to Caesar, which John tells the soldiers to be content with. "Give," he says, "to Caesar the things that are Caesar's" (Matt. 22:21). For tribute-money is given on purpose to pay the soldiers for war. Again, in the case of the centurion who said, "I am a man under authority, and have soldiers under me; and I say to one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it." Christ gave due praise to his faith; he did not tell him to leave the service (Matt. 8:9f.). But there is no need here to enter on the long discussion of just and unjust wars.

75. A great deal depends on the causes for which men undertake wars, and on the authority they have for doing so; for the natural order which seeks the peace of

mankind ordains that the prince should have the power of undertaking war if he thinks it advisable, and that the soldiers should perform their military duties in behalf of the peace and safety of the community. When war is undertaken in obedience to God, who would rebuke, or humble, or crush the pride of man, it must be allowed to be a righteous war; for even the wars which arise from human passion cannot harm the eternal well-being of God, nor even hurt his saints; for in the trial of their patience and the chastening of their spirit and in bearing fatherly correction they are rather benefited than injured. No one can have any power against them but what is given him from above. For there is no power but of God, who either orders or permits. Since therefore a righteous man, serving it may be under an ungodly king, may preserve the order required by civil peace in fighting at the due order of his sovereign — for in some cases it is plainly the will of God that he should fight, and in others, where this is not so plain, though it may be an unrighteous command on the part of the king, the soldier is innocent because his position makes obedience a duty — how much more must the man be blameless who carries on war on the authority of God, of whom every one who serves him knows that he can never require what is wrong?

76. If it is supposed that God could not enjoin warfare because in after times it was said by the Lord Jesus Christ, "I say unto you, that ye resist not evil; but if any one strike thee on the right cheek, turn to him the left also" (Matt. 5:39), the answer is, that what is here required is not a bodily action, but an inward disposition. The sacred seat of virtue is the heart, and such were the hearts of our fathers, the righteous men of old. But order required such a regulation of events and such a distinction of times as to show first of all that even earthly blessings (for so temporal kingdoms and victory over enemies are considered to be, and these are the things which the community of the ungodly all over the world are continually begging from idols and devils) are entirely under the control and at the disposal of the one true God. Thus under the Old Testament the secret of the kingdom of heaven, which was to be disclosed in due time, was veiled, and so far obscured, in the disguise of earthly promises. But when the fullness of time came for the revelation of the New Testament, which was hidden under the types of the Old, clear testimony was to be borne to the truth, that there is another life for which this life ought to be disregarded, and another kingdom for which the opposition of all earthly kingdoms should be patiently borne. Thus the name martyrs, which means witnesses, was given to those who by the will of God bore this testimony by their confessions, their sufferings and their death. The number of such witnesses is so great that if it pleased Christ — who called Saul by a voice from heaven and, having changed him from a wolf to a sheep, sent him into the midst of wolves — to unite them all in one army and to give them success in battle as he gave to the Hebrews, what nation could withstand them? What kingdom would remain unsubdued? But as the doctrine of the New Testament is that we must serve God not for temporal happiness in this life but for eternal felicity hereafter, this truth was most strikingly confirmed by the patient endurance of what is commonly called adversity for the sake of that felicity. So "when the time had fully come," the Son of God, "born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law" (Gal. 4:4f.), "descended from David according to the flesh"

(Rom. 1:3), sends his disciples as sheep into the midst of wolves and bids them not fear those that can kill the body but cannot kill the soul, and promises that even the body will be entirely restored so that not a hair shall be lost (Matt. 10:16, 28, 30). Peter's sword he orders back into its sheath, restoring as it was before the ear of his enemy that had been cut off. He says that he could obtain legions of angels to destroy his enemies, but that he must drink the cup which his Father's will had given him (Matt. 26:52f.; Luke 22:51). He sets the example of drinking this cup, then hands it to his followers, manifesting thus, both in word and deed, the grace of patience. Therefore God raised him from the dead, and "bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2:9-11).

The patriarchs and prophets, then, have a kingdom in this world, to show that these kingdoms, too, are given and taken away by God; the apostles and martyrs had no kingdom here, to show the superior desirableness of the Kingdom of Heaven. The prophets, however, could even in those times die for the truth, (as the Lord himself says, "From the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah" [Matt. 23:35]); and in these days, since the commencement of the fulfillment of what is prophesied in the psalm of Christ (under the figure of Solomon, which means "the peacemaker" as Christ is our peace), "All kings of the earth shall bow to him, all nations shall serve him" (Ps. 72:11), we have seen Christian emperors, who have put all their confidence in Christ, gaining splendid victories over ungodly enemies whose hope was in the rites of idolatry and devil-worship. There are public and undeniable proofs of the fact that on one side the prognostications of devils were found to be fallacious, and on the other the predictions of saints were a means of support; and we have now writings in which those facts are recorded.

Translation: R. Stothert and A. Newman, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, adapted.

Letter 153

Augustine, bishop, servant of Christ and of his household, gives greeting in the Lord to his beloved son, Macedonius.

1. When a man is as much burdened with public duties and as devoted to the interest of others and to the public welfare rather than his own, as you are — and I congratulate you — it is not right for us to deprive you of our conversation nor to delay you with a foreword. Here, then, is what you wanted to learn from me, or to discover whether I knew the answer. If you judged that it was a trifling or superfluous matter, you would see that there was no place for it among such great and such exigent cares. You ask me why we say that it is part of our priestly duty to intercede for condemned persons, and to be displeased if we do not succeed, as if we were failing to carry out that part of our duty. You then say that you have a serious doubt about this, whether it is part of religion. Thereupon, you add your reason for being

disturbed and you say: "If sin is so strictly forbidden by the Lord that no opportunity of repentance is granted after the first, how can we argue that any crime of whatever sort should be forgiven?" You press the point still more closely and you say that we approve an act by wishing it to go unpunished, and, if it is a fact that the one who approves of a sin is involved in all the circumstances of it no less than the one who commits it, it is clear that we are implicated in a share of the guilt as often as we wish the one who is subject to the penalty to go unpunished.

2. Anyone who did not know your gentleness and kindness would be affronted by these words. But we who know that you wrote this in order to raise the question, not to give an opinion, have no hesitation in answering these words at once by other words of yours. As if you did not wish us to delay on this question, you either forestalled what we were going to say, or you advised us what we ought to say, and you said: "Besides, here is another point, which is even more serious. All sins seem to deserve forgiveness when the guilty person promises amendment!" Before I discuss that more serious point which follows in your letter, I shall take up this concession which you have made and use it to remove that obstacle which makes it seem possible for our intercession to be curtailed. So, then, as far as opportunity is granted, we intercede for all sins because "all sins seem to deserve forgiveness when the guilty person promises amendment." This is your sentiment and it is also ours.

3. We do not in any way approve the faults which we wish to see corrected, nor do we wish wrong-doing to go unpunished because we take pleasure in it; we pity the man while detesting the deed or crime, and the more the vice displeases us, the less do we want the culprit to die unrepentant. It is easy and simple to hate evil men because they are evil, but uncommon and dutiful to love them because they are men; thus, in one and the same person you disapprove the guilt and approve the nature, and you thereby hate the guilt with a more just reason because by it the nature which you love is defiled. Therefore, he who makes war on the crime in order to free the man is not involved in a share of the wrong-doing, but, rather, of human feeling. Moreover, there is no other place but this life for correcting morals; whatever anyone has sought out for himself in this life, the same will he have after it. Consequently, we are forced by our love for humankind to intercede for the guilty lest they end this life by punishment, only to find that punishment does not end with this life.

4. Do not doubt that this duty of ours is a part of religion because God, "with whom there is no iniquity," whose power is supreme, who not only sees what each one is but also foresees what he will be, who alone cannot err in his judgment because he cannot be deceived in his knowledge, nevertheless acts as the Gospel expresses it: "He maketh his sun to rise upon the good and bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust." The Lord Christ, exhorting us to imitate his wonderful goodness, says: "Love your enemies, do good to them that persecute you, that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven, who maketh his sun to rise upon the good and bad and raineth upon the just and the unjust" (Matt. 5:44f.). Is there anyone who does not know that many abuse this divine clemency and kindness to their own destruction? The Apostle upbraids these and reproves them gravely, saying: "And thinkest thou, O man, that judgest them that do such things, and dost the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despiseth thou the riches of his goodness and patience and

longsuffering? Knowest thou not that the benignity of God leadeth thee to penance? But according to thy hardness and impenitent heart thou treasurest up to thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the just judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his works" (Rom. 2:3-6). Is the fact that some persist in their wickedness any proof that God does not persist in his patience, punishing very few sins in this world lest we fail to believe in his divine providence, and saving many for the last judgment to justify his future decree?"

5. No, I do not think that heavenly Master commands us to love wickedness when he commands us to love our enemies, to do good to those who hate us and pray for those who persecute us, although, without doubt, if we worship God devoutly, we can have no enemies and persecutors roused to bitter hatred against us except the wicked. Are we, then, to love the wicked? Just so. He who commands this is God, yet he does not for this include us in the ranks of the wicked, nor does he himself join their ranks by sparing them and granting them life and health. His intention, as far as it is given to the good man to know it, is expressed by the Apostle when he says "Knowest thou not that the benignity of God leadeth thee to penance?" We wish to add that we do not spare or favour the sins of those for whom we intercede.

6. In the case of some whose sins are public, after they have been released from your severe sentence, we keep them from participation in the Sacrament of the altar so that, by repentance and by punishing themselves, they may be able to make atonement to him whom they have flouted by their sin. The one who repents sincerely effects nothing less than this: he does not allow his wrong-doing to remain unpunished. Thus God spares the one who does not spare himself, but no one who despises his high and holy judgement escapes it. But, if he shows such patience by sparing the wicked and abandoned, and by granting them life and health, although he knows that many of them will not do penance, how much more, in the case of those who promise amendment, even though we are not sure whether they will do what they promise, should we be merciful to the extent of bending your inflexible decision by interceding for them! Without presumption, because he commands it, we pray for them to God from whom none of their future conduct is hidden.

7. Vice, however, sometimes makes such inroads among men that, even after they have done penance and have been readmitted to the Sacrament of the altar, they commit the same or more grievous sins, yet God makes his sun to rise even on such men and gives his gifts of life and health as lavishly as he did before their fall. And, although that same opportunity of penance is not again granted them in the Church, God does not forget to exercise his patience toward them. Suppose one of these were to say to us: "Either give me the same chance of doing penance again or pronounce me hopeless and let me do whatever I please as far as my resources allow and human laws do not forbid, indulging in illicit love and every kind of riotous living, condemned, indeed, by God but praised by most men; or, if you withdraw me from this baseness, tell me whether it will do me any good for the next life to despise in this life all the enticements of the most seductive pleasure, to curb the impulses of my passions, to chastise my body by withholding from it many lawful and allowable pleasures, to punish myself by penance more severe than the former, to groan more sorrowfully, to weep more freely, to live better, to give more lavish alms to the poor,

to burn more ardently with that charity which 'covereth a multitude of sins'" (1 Pet. 4:8), would anyone of us be so far gone in folly as to say to this man: "None of those acts will do you any good for the life to come; go and enjoy the sweetness of this life at least"? May God keep this monstrous and sacrilegious madness far from us! It may, therefore, be a careful and useful enactment that the opportunity of that very humble penance be granted only once in the Church, lest that remedy, by becoming common, be less helpful to sick souls, for it is now more effective by being more respected. Yet, who would dare say to God: "Why do you pardon this man a second time when he has been caught again in the snare of sin after his first penance?" Who would dare to say that such are not included in the saying of the Apostle: "Knowest thou not that the patience of God leadeth thee to penance?" (cf. Rom. 2:4) or that this other saying is limited so as to exclude them: "Blessed are all they that trust in him" (Ps. 2:12), or that the following does not apply to them: "Do ye manfully and let your heart be strengthened, all ye that hope in the Lord" (Ps. 30:25)?

8. Since, therefore, God shows such great patience and mercy toward sinners that they are not damned forever if they amend their conduct in this life, and since he looks to no one to show him mercy, because no one is happier than he, no one more powerful, no one more just, it follows that we men ought to be such toward other men, for, whatever praise we heap up on this life of ours, we never say that it is without sin, because, if we did, "We deceive ourselves," as it is written, "and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8). Consequently, although the prosecutor and the defender are two different persons, and the role of intercessor is not the same as that of judge — it would take too long, and is not necessary in this speech to discourse on these various duties — the very avengers of crime, who are not to be influenced by their personal anger but are to act as agents of the law, and those who enforce the law against proved injuries done to others, not to themselves, as judges should do, all these quail before the divine judgement, recalling that they have need of the mercy of God for their own sins, and they do not think they do an injury to their office if they show mercy to those over whom they have the lawful power of life and death.

9. When the Jews brought the woman taken in adultery to the Lord Christ they tempted him by saying that the Law commanded such a person to be stoned, and when they asked what he would command for her he answered: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her" (John 8:3-7). Thus, he did not reject the Law which commanded the stoning of a woman guilty of this sin, and at the same time, by rousing fear in those whose verdict could have put her to death, he recalled them to thoughts of mercy. I think that upon hearing this verdict of the Lord, her husband himself, if he was there and demanding satisfaction for this breach of marital fidelity, was thoroughly frightened into changing his mind from his desire for revenge into a sentiment of pardon. See how the accuser is warned not to seek vengeance for his personal injuries, when even judges are thus forbidden to avenge themselves in punishing an adulteress, and are obliged to enforce the Law, not to indulge their private feeling! Thus, when Joseph, to whom the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Lord, was espoused, discovered that she was with child and knew that it was not his child, he could only believe that she was an adulteress, yet he was unwilling to punish her, although he was not thereby accessory to the sin. This good intention

was credited to him as virtue; therefore this is written of him: "And being a just man, and not willing publicly to expose her, he was minded to put her away privately. But when he thought on these things, the Angel appeared to him" (Matt. 1:19-20) and revealed to him that what he had thought was the result of sin was the act of God.

10. If, then, the hurt feeling of the accuser and the rigour of the judge are tempered by the knowledge of our common human weakness, what do you think the defender or the intercessor ought to do for the accused, when even you good men who are now judges, after having gained much experience by pleading men's cases in the law courts, know how much more willingly you usually undertake a defence than a prosecution? Yet there is a great difference between the defender and the intercessor, for the former expends his effort chiefly in diminishing or covering up the charge of guilt, while the intercessor works for the removal or reduction of the penalty, even when there is evidence of guilt. The just who are with God perform this service for sinners; sinners themselves are exhorted to do the same for themselves, for it is written: "Confess your sins one to another and pray one for another" (James 5:16). Every man claims for himself from every other man, where possible, this human consideration, for what each one would punish if it occurred in his own house he wishes to leave unpunished in another's house. For, if he is summoned to a friend's house and if the friend is angry in his presence at someone on whom he has the power to avenge himself, or if he suddenly comes upon an angry man, he is considered, not a man of great uprightness, but a most inhumane one, if he does not intervene. I know that you yourself with some of your friends in the church at Carthage interceded for a cleric whose bishop was deservedly angry with him and certainly there was no fear there of a physical punishment, but of a disciplinary measure short of bloodshed — yet, when you wished something to go unpunished which even you disapproved of, we did not estimate you as favourers of guilt; we listened to you as most considerate intercessors. So, if it is right for you to moderate an ecclesiastical sanction by intercession, how much more ought a bishop to intercede against your sword, since the sanction is invoked that the one against whom it is directed may lead a good life, but the sword is drawn that he may not live at all!

11. Finally, the Lord himself intervened among men that the adulteress might not be stoned, and thus he commended to us the duty of intercession, except that he achieved by fear what we gain by prayer. He is the Lord, we are the servants; he used fear in such a way that we ought to be afraid, for who of us is without sin? When he said to those who offered the sinful woman to him for punishment, that he who knew himself to be without sin should first cast a stone at her, their savagery died as their conscience trembled, for then they slipped away from that gathering and left the poor woman alone with the merciful Lord. Let the piety of Christians yield to this sentence as the impiety of the Jews yielded to it; let the humility of adorers yield as the pride of persecutors has yielded; let the submission of the faithful yield as the lying pretence of the temper yielded. Pardon the wicked, good Sir; be more perfect as you are more merciful, humble yourself more profoundly as you rise higher by your power.

12. Looking upon your conduct, I have called you a good man, but do you look upon the words of Christ and say to yourself: "None is good but God alone"

(Mark 10:18; Luke 18:19). Although this is true — and Truth has said it — it ought not to be imagined that I said that through a deceitful flattery, or that I set myself up as if in contradiction to the Lord's words, calling you a good man, whereas he says: "None is good but God alone," for the Lord did not contradict himself when he said: "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things" (Matt. 12:35; Luke 6:45). God, therefore, is uniquely good, and this he cannot lose. He is good; he is not good by sharing in any other good, because the good by which he is good is himself. But when a man is good, his good is from God, because he cannot be his own good. All who become good do so through his Spirit; our nature has been created to attain to him through acts of its own will. If we are to become good, it is important for us to receive and hold what he gives, who is good in himself; whoever neglects this is evil in himself. Therefore, in so far as a man acts uprightly, that is, performs his good works intelligently, lovingly, and devoutly, in so far he is good; whereas, in so far as he sins, that is, turns away from truth and love and piety, in so far he is evil. But, who is without some sin in this life? We say a man is good whose good deeds predominate, and a man is perfect whose sin is very slight.

13. For this reason, those whom the Lord himself calls good because they receive a share of divine grace he also calls evil because they have the defects of human weakness, until the whole of which we are composed is healed of all evil tendency and crosses over into that life where there will be no more sin forever. Certainly it was the good, not the wicked, whom he taught to pray when he instructed them to say: "Our Father who art in heaven" (Matt. 6:9). These then become sons of God, not by natural generation, but by grace; to them, as to those who receive him, "He gave the power to be made the sons of God" (John 1:12). In the fashion of the Scriptures this spiritual generation is called adoption, to distinguish it from the generation of God from God, of the Co-eternal from the Eternal; hence it is written: "Who shall declare his generation?" (Isa. 53:8). He showed then that those are good who by his will say truthfully to God: "Our Father who art in heaven," but in the same prayer he taught them to say, among other things: "Forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors" (Matt. 6:12). Although it is evident that these debts are sins, he afterward expressed this more definitely when he said: "For if you will forgive men their offences, your Father will forgive you also your offences" (Matt. 6:14). The baptised recite this prayer, and thenceforth none of their past sins remain, for Holy Church grants the baptised forgiveness of all. But, as they live afterward in a state of mortal frailty, they necessarily contract other guilt which requires forgiveness; otherwise they could not truthfully say: "Forgive us our debts." They are good, then, in virtue of being sons of God, but, in so far as they sin, as they admit by their own truthful confession, they are evil.

14. Possibly, someone may say that here is a difference between the sins of the good and the sins of the bad, which is not improbably said on frequent occasions. Nevertheless, the Lord Jesus spoke without any ambiguity when he said that God was the Father of those whom he called evil. In the same sermon in which he taught that prayer, he said in another place exhorting them to pray to God: "Ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened to you. For everyone that asketh receiveth and he that seeketh findeth and to him that knocketh it

shall be opened"; and a little further on: "If you then being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" (Matt. 7:7, 8, 11; Luke 11:9, 10, 13). Is God, then, the Father of evil men? Perish the thought! How, then, does he say "Your Father who is in heaven" to those whom he addresses as "You, being evil," except that Truth shows both what we are by God's goodness and what we are by human defect, praising the one, correcting the other? Well was it said by Seneca, a contemporary of the Apostles, several of whose letters to the Apostle Paul are extant: "He who hates bad men hates all men." Yet, bad men are to be loved, so that they may not continue to be bad, just as sick men are to be loved so that they may not remain sick, but may be cured.

15. Whatever sin we commit during our sojourn in this life, after that remission of sin which is effected by baptism, even if such sin is not of a kind to entail segregation from the divine altar, is not expiated by unprofitable regret, but by the sacrifices of mercy. Therefore, what we accomplish in making you act on our intercession you know that you offer to God for yourselves, for you need the mercy which you grant to others. Notice who said: "Forgive and you shall be forgiven, give and it shall be given to you" (Luke 6:37, 38). Yet even if our life were such that there would be no reason for us to say: "Forgive us our debts" (Matt 6:12; Luke 11:4), our soul ought to be more full of mercy the more it is free from evil, so that, if we are not pierced through by the words of the Lord: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her," we may at least follow the example of him who was certainly without sin, and who said to the woman, deserted by her terrified captors: "Neither will I condemn thee, go now and sin no more" (John 8:7-11). The sinful woman could have feared, after the departure of those who had recognised their own sins as a prelude to forgiving another's, that he who was without sin might have condemned her with perfect justice. But, when she answered that no man had condemned her, he, untroubled in conscience and overflowing with mercy, said: "If wickedness could pardon thee, why dost thou fear innocence?" And lest he should seem to approve rather than to forgive her evil deeds, he said: "Go now and sin no more," to show that he pardoned the person but did not condone the guilt of the person. You see, then, that it is a matter of religion and does not involve us in a share of the evil-doing when we intercede, if not as criminals for criminals, at least as sinners for sinners, and, I think, with sinners — please take this as spoken sincerely, and without offence.

16. Surely it is not without purpose that we have the institution of the power of kings, the death penalty of the judge, the barbed hooks of the executioner, the weapons of the soldier, the right of punishment of the overlord, even the severity of the good father. All those things have their methods, their causes, their reasons, their practical benefits. While these are feared, the wicked are kept within bounds and the good live more peacefully among the wicked. However, men are not to be called good because they refrain from wrong-doing through their fear of such things — no one is good through dread of punishment but through love of righteousness — even so, it is not without advantage that human recklessness should be confined by fear of the law so that innocence may be safe among evil-doers, and the evil-doers them-

selves may be cured by calling on God when their freedom of action is held in check by fear of punishment. However, the intercession of bishops is not a violation of this arrangement of human affairs; on the contrary, there would be neither motive nor opportunity for intervention if it were not for this. The more the penalty of the offender is deserved, the more gratefully the bounty of the intercessor and of the one who pardons is received. It is for this reason, as I see it, that a more unyielding justice shines forth in the Old Testament in the time of the ancient Prophets, to show that penalties were levied against the wicked for a good purpose; but in the New Testament we are urged to pardon offenders with mercy, either as a saving remedy by which our own sins may be pardoned, or as a means of commending gentleness, so that truth, when preached by those who pardon, may not be so much feared as loved.

17. It is a matter of great importance what intention a man has in showing leniency. Just as it is sometimes mercy to punish, so it may be cruelty to pardon. For, to use a well-worn case as an example, who would not truthfully say that a person is cruel who would allow a child to play with snakes because he was obstinately set on so doing? Who would not call another kind-hearted who would restrain the child even to the extent of beating him if words had no effect? For this reason, restraint should not go so far as death, because there must be someone to whom restraint is beneficial. Yet it makes a great difference when one man is killed by another, whether it happened through a desire of injuring him, or of carrying off something dishonestly, as it might be done by an enemy, a thief; or whether it happened in the course of inflicting punishment or carrying out an order, as by a judge, an executioner; or through self-defence or the rescue of another, as a thief is killed by a traveller or an enemy by a soldier. And sometimes the one who was the cause of death is more at fault than the killer, as would be the case if a man were to default on the one who stood bail for him, and the latter should pay the required penalty instead of the other. Nevertheless, not everyone who causes another's death is guilty. What if a man were to seek to ravish someone and should kill himself because he did not get his wish? Or if a son, fearing the blows which he deserved from his father, should kill himself by falling? Or if someone should commit suicide because one man had been set free or to prevent another from being freed? Because these circumstances have been the cause of another's death, are we to consent to sin? are we to deprive a father of the authority to inflict punishment for wrongdoing — which is done through a desire of correcting, not of injuring — or are we to forego the works of mercy? When these things happen, we owe them human regret, but we have no right for that reason to put restraint on the will of the doers to prevent them from happening again.

18. In the same way, when we intercede for an offender who deserves condemnation, there sometimes are consequences which we do not intend, either in the person who is set free through our intercession, so that he goes rioting about more extravagantly, because his unchecked boldness goes to greater lengths of passion, being ungrateful for the leniency shown; and his single escape from death may be the cause of many other deaths. Or it may be that the object of our kindness changes for the better and mends his morals, but he may be the cause of another's perishing as a result of an evil life, because the latter, seeing that the former has escaped punishment,

commits the same crimes or even worse ones. Yet, I think, these evil consequences are not to be laid to our charge when we intercede with you, but, rather, the good aims which we have in view and which we intend when we act thus, that is, to commend mildness so as to win men's love for the word of truth, and to ensure that those who are freed from temporal death may so live as not to fall into eternal death from which they can never be freed.

19. There is good, then, in your severity which works to secure our tranquillity, and there is good in our intercession which works to restrain your severity. Do not be displeased at being petitioned by the good, because the good are not displeased that you are feared by the wicked. Even the Apostle Paul used fear to check the evil deeds of men, fear not only of the judgment to come but even of your present instruments of torture, asserting that they form part of the plan of divine providence, when he said: "Let every soul be subject to higher powers, for there is no power but from God; and those that are ordained of God. Therefore he that resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist, purchase to themselves damnation: for princes are not a terror to the good work but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good and thou shalt have praise for the same; for he is God's minister to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, fear, for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath upon him that doth evil. Wherefore be subject of necessity, not only for wrath but also for conscience sake. For therefore also you pay tribute, for they are the ministers of God, serving unto this purpose. Render therefore to all men their dues, tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour. Owe no man anything but to love one another" (Rom. 13:1-8). These words of the Apostle show the usefulness of your severity. Thus, as those who fear are ordered to render love to those who cause them fear, so those who cause fear are ordered to render love to those who fear. Let nothing be done through desire of hurting, but all through love of helping, and nothing will be done cruelly, inhumanly. Thus, the sentence of the judge will be feared, but not so as to cause the religious motive of the intercessor to be scorned, because it is only by yielding and pardoning that the good effect of amending a man's life is produced. But, if perversity and impiety are so great that neither punishment nor pardon can avail to correct them, it is still true that, whether severity or leniency is shown, the obligation of charity is fulfilled by the good through their intention and upright conscience which God beholds.

20. In the following part of your letter where you say: "But now human behaviour has come to this pass that men wish to have the punishment of their crime remitted and at the same time to keep the profit which they gained by their evil deeds," you are speaking of the lowest kind of men, who are absolutely unable to be helped by the remedy of repentance. If the offence committed has involved theft, and restitution is not made, although it is possible to make it, there is no repentance but only pretence. If, however, there is true repentance, the sin will not be forgiven unless there is restitution of stolen goods, but, as I said, where restitution is possible. Often, however, the thief dissipates the goods either by connivance with other offenders or by living an evil life himself, and has nothing left with which to make restitution. To

him we certainly cannot say, "Pay back what you took," unless we believe that he has it and denied it. But in the case where he suffers some physical punishment at the hands of the offended party, because it is believed that he has the means of paying back what he took, he pays the penalty of the sin by which he wrongfully stole through the corporal pains applied to make him pay back. It is not an uncivilised thing to intercede for such persons, as one does for those convicted of crimes, since it is not done to save them entirely from making restitution, but so that man may not show cruelty to man, especially the one who has already been given satisfaction for the guilty act, but still wants his money and fears to be cheated of it, without seeking to be avenged. Finally, in such cases, if we can convince the injured party that those for whom we intercede do not possess what is demanded, there is a cessation of their importunity on us. Sometimes, indeed, merciful men, in a state of real doubt, are not willing to inflict certain punishment for the sake of uncertain money. This is the mercy which it befits us to challenge and exhort them to show, for it is better for you to lose the money if he has it than to torture or kill him if he does not have it. In this case it is more effective to intercede with creditors than with judges, because the judge who has the power to enforce restitution and does not do it might seem to be a party to the theft, although in using force he must display a regard for honesty without losing human feeling.

21. This, indeed, I would say with complete assurance: that the one who intercedes for a man to save him from restoring his ill-gotten goods and who fails, when someone has fled to him for refuge, to force him to make restitution as far as he honestly can, is a party to the theft and the guilt. It would be more merciful for us to withhold our succour from such men than to offer it to them, for he does not succour who helps someone to sin when he should hinder him and turn him away from it. But can we or ought we for that reason either to extort the money from them or hand them over to another's extortion? We act within the limits of our episcopal jurisdiction, threatening them sometimes with human, but especially and always with divine, judgment. In the case of those who refuse to make restitution, of whom we know that they have stolen and have the means to pay, we rebuke and reproach them, showing our detestation of them, some in private, some publicly, according as the diversity of characters shows the possibility of reforming them. Yet, in this we avoid rousing them to greater madness, sometimes, if an aggravation of the fault to be cured is not feared, we even cut them off from communion at the holy altar.

22. Indeed, it often happens that they deceive us either by saying that they have not stolen or by insisting that they have no means of making restitution, but often, too, you are deceived by thinking either that we do not make them pay back or that they have the means of paying back. All or almost all of us men love to call or consider our suspicions knowledge, since we are influenced by the credible evidence of circumstances; yet some credible things are false, just as some incredible ones are true. Therefore, mentioning some who "wish to have the punishment of their crime remitted and at the same time to keep the profit which they gained by their evil deeds," you added something else when you said: "Your priestly office thinks that intercession should be made for these, also." It is possible that you might know something I do not know and that I might think I ought to intercede for someone in a

case where I could be deceived, but you could not, because I believed that a man did not possess what you knew that he did possess. Thus it could be that we might not have the same idea of a man's guilt, but neither of us would approve a failure to make restitution. As men we have different ideas about a man, but in the concept of justice we are one. In the same way it is also possible for me to know that someone has nothing, while you are not too sure that he has, but you have good grounds for suspecting him and in this way it seems to you that I intercede for a man "who wished to have the punishment of his crime remitted and to keep the profit which he gained by his evil deed." To sum up, then, neither to you, nor to men such as we rejoice to find you — if any others can be found — nor to those who with great eagerness pursue interests foreign to them, utterly unprofitable and even extremely dangerous and deadly, nor to my own heart would I dare to say, as I would not think or decide, that intercession should be made for anyone to enable him to possess unpunished what he has wrongfully taken, when his offence has been pardoned, always supposing that he still has either what he took or some other means of making restitution.

23. It is not true, however, that everything which is taken from an unwilling donor is wrongfully taken. Most people do not want to give due credit to their doctor, or to pay a workman his hire, yet when these receive their due from unwilling debtors they do not acquire anything unlawfully; on the contrary, it would be wrong to deprive them of it. But there is no reason for a judge to take money for a just judgment or a witness for true testimony, because the advocate is paid for legal protection and the lawyer for truthful advice; the two former have to make an inquiry into both sides, the latter stand on one side. But when verdicts and testimony are sold, they are unfair and untrue, because just and true ones are not to be sold, and it is much more infamous for money to be taken when it is infamously even if willingly paid. The one who pays for a just verdict usually demands his money back on the ground that it was wrongfully taken from him, since justice ought not to be for sale; while the one who pays for an unjust verdict would like to demand his money back, if he were not afraid or ashamed of having paid it.

24. There are other personages of lower rank who not uncommonly take pay from both sides, such as a court attendant by whom a service is performed or on whom it devolves. What is extorted by these with excessive dishonesty is usually demanded back, but if paid according to accepted custom it is not asked back, and those who do demand it contrary to custom we disapprove of more vigorously than those who accept it according to custom, since many officials, necessary to human affairs, are influenced or attracted by gains of this kind. If these latter change their way of life and attain to a higher degree of virtuous living, they are more ready to distribute to the poor, as if it were their own, what they have acquired in this way than they are to pay it back to those from whom they have received it, as a form of restitution of what is not their own. However, we think that those who have done an injury to human society by theft, rapine, calumny, oppression, housebreaking ought to pay what they owe rather than give it away, following the example of the tax collector, Zacchaeus, in the Gospel, who received the Lord into his house, was suddenly

converted to a holy life, and said: "The half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have wronged any man of anything I restore him fourfold" (Luke 19:8).

25. If there is to be a more sincere regard for justice it would be more honest to say to the advocate: "Pay back what you received when you stood against truth, supported evil-doing, deceived the judge, won your case by lying, as you see that many of the most honourable and eloquent men seem to allow themselves to do, not only with safety, but even with renown," rather than to say to any minor official struggling to perform some duty: "Pay back what you received when at the judge's order you held a man who was needed for some case, when you tied him so that he could not resist, shut him up so that he could not run away, and finally produced him while the trial was going on, or dismissed him when it was finished." It is easy to see why no one says this to an advocate, because a man naturally does not wish to ask back what he gave a patron to win a bad case, just as he does not wish to pay back what he received from his opponent when he won his case dishonestly. Finally, how hard it is to find an advocate or a truly good man who has become an advocate, who would say to his client: "Take back what you paid me for representing you so dishonestly, and give back to your opponent what you took from him as a result of my dishonest pleading." Yet, anyone who thoroughly repents of his dishonest former life ought to do even this, so that, if the dishonest litigant is not willing to make amends for his injustice after this warning, he at least will take no pay for the injustice. Otherwise, it might happen that there is an obligation to pay back what is secretly taken from another by theft, but none to pay back what is gotten by deceiving the judge and evading the law in the very court of law where offences are punished. And what about lending money at interest, which the very laws and judges require to be paid back? Who is more cruel: the one who steals from or cheats a rich man or the one who destroys a poor man by usury? What is acquired this way is certainly ill-gotten gain, and I would wish restitution to be made of it, but it is not possible to sue for it in court.

26. And now, if we look carefully at what is written: "The whole world is the wealth of the faithful man, but the unfaithful one has not a penny" (Prov. 17:6 Septuagint), do we not prove that those who seem to rejoice in lawfully acquired gains, and do not know how to use them, are really in possession of other men's property? Certainly, what is lawfully possessed is not another's property, but "lawfully" means justly and justly means rightly. He who uses his wealth badly possesses it wrongfully, and wrongful possession means that it is another's property. You see, then, how many there are who ought to make restitution of another's goods, although those to whom restitution is due may be a few; wherever they are, their claim to just possession is in proportion to their indifference to wealth. Obviously, no one possesses justice unlawfully: whoever does not love it does not have it; but money is wrongly possessed by bad men while good men who love it least have the best right to it. In this life the wrong of evil possessors is endured and among them certain laws are established which are called civil laws, not because they bring men to make a good use of their wealth, but because those who make bad use of it become thereby less injurious. This comes about either because some of them become faithful and fervent — and these have a right to all things — or because those who live among them are not

hampered by their evil deeds, but are tested until they come to that City where they are heirs to eternity, where the just alone have a place, the wise alone leadership, and those who are there possess what is truly their own. Yet, even here, we do not intercede to prevent restitution from being made, according to earthly customs and laws, although we should like you to be indulgent to evil-doers, not to make them take pleasure or persist in their evil, but because, whenever any of them become good, God is appeased by a sacrifice of mercy, and if evil-doers did not find him merciful there would be no good men.

For a long time I seem to have been putting a burden on a busy man by my talk, whereas it would have been possible to explain quickly what was asked by a man as clear-sighted and experienced as you are. I ought to have made an end of this long since, and I would have if I had thought you would be the only one to read what you urged me to write. May you enjoy a happy life in Christ, my dearest son.

Translation: Sister W. Parsons, S.N.D., Fathers of the Church (New York, 1953). Used with permission.

From *Letter* 93

3. You say that no example is found in the writings of evangelists and apostles, of any petition presented on behalf of the church to the kings of the earth against her enemies. Who denies this? None such is found. But at that time the prophecy, "Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings; be instructed ye judges of the earth; serve the Lord with fear" (Ps. 2:10f.), was not yet fulfilled. Up to that time the words which we find at the beginning of the same Psalm were receiving their fulfilment, "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against his anointed" (Ps. 2:1f.). Truly, if past events recorded in the prophetic books were figures of the future, there was given under King Nebuchadnezzar a figure both of the time of the church under the apostles, and of her present time. In the age of the apostles and martyrs that was fulfilled which was prefigured when the aforesaid king compelled pious and just men to bow down to his image and cast into the flames all who refused. Now, however, is fulfilled that which was prefigured soon after in the same king, when, being converted to the worship of the true God, he made a decree throughout his empire that whosoever should speak against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, should suffer the penalty which their crime deserved (Dan. 3:29). The earlier time of that king represented the former age of emperors who did not believe in Christ, at whose hands the Christians suffered because of the wicked; but the later time represented the age of the successors to the imperial throne, now believing in Christ, at whose hands the wicked suffer because of the Christians.

It is manifest, however, that towards those who, under the Christian name, have been led astray by perverse men, a moderate severity, or rather clemency, is carefully observed, lest Christ's sheep be among the wandering who by such mea-

sures must be brought back to the flock; so that by punishments such as exile and fines they are admonished to consider what they suffer and why, and are taught to prefer the Scriptures which they read to human legends and calumnies. For which of us, yea, which of you, does not speak well of the laws issued by the emperors against heathen sacrifices? In these, assuredly, a penalty much more severe has been appointed, for the punishment of that impiety is death. But in repressing and restraining you the thing aimed at has been rather that you should be admonished to depart from evil, than that you should be punished for a crime. [. . .]

5. You see, therefore, I suppose, that the thing to be considered when anyone is coerced is not the mere fact of the coercion but the nature of that to which he is coerced, whether it be good or bad; not that any one can be good in spite of his own will, but that, through fear of suffering what he does not desire, he either renounces his hostile prejudices or is compelled to examine the truth of which he had been contentedly ignorant; and under the influence of this fear he repudiates the error which he was wont to defend, or seeks the truth of which he formerly knew nothing, and now willingly holds what he formerly rejected. Perhaps it would be utterly useless to assert this in words if it were not demonstrated by so many examples. We see not a few men here and there, but many cities, once Donatist now Catholic, vehemently detesting the diabolical schism and ardently loving the unity of the church; and these became Catholic under the influence of that fear which so offends you, by the laws of emperors from Constantine, before whom your party of its own accord impeached Caecilianus, down to the emperors of our own time, who most justly decree that the decision of the judge whom your own party chose and whom they preferred to a tribunal of bishops should be maintained in force against you.

I have therefore yielded to the evidence afforded by these instances which my colleagues have laid before me. For originally my opinion was that no one should be coerced into the unity of Christ, that we must act only by words, fight only by arguments and prevail by force of reason, lest we should have those whom we knew as avowed heretics feigning themselves to be Catholics. But this opinion of mine was overcome not by the words of those who controverted it, but by the conclusive instances to which they could point. For in the first place there was set over against my opinion my own town, which, although it was once wholly on the side of Donatus, was brought over to the Catholic unity by fear of the imperial edicts, and which we now see filled with such detestation of your ruinous perversity that it would scarcely be believed that it had ever been involved in your error. There were so many others which were mentioned to me by name, that from facts themselves I was made to own that to this matter the word of Scripture might be understood as applying: "Give opportunity to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser" (Prov. 9:9). For how many were already, as we assuredly know, willing to be Catholics, being moved by the indisputable plainness of truth, but daily putting off their avowal of this through fear of offending their own party! How many were bound, not by truth — for you never pretended to that as yours — but by the heavy chains of inveterate custom, so that in them was fulfilled the divine saying: "By mere words a servant who is hardened will not be disciplined; for though he understand, he will not give heed" (Prov. 29:19). How many supposed the sect of Donatus to be the true church merely because ease

had made them too listless, or conceited, or sluggish to take pains to examine Catholic truth! How many would have entered earlier had not the calumnies of slanderers, who declared that we offered something else than we do upon the altar of God, shut them out! How many, believing that it mattered not to which party a Christian might belong, remained in the schism of Donatus only because they had been born in it, and no one was compelling them to forsake it and pass over into the Catholic church! [. . .]

12. We disapprove of every one who, taking advantage of this imperial edict, persecutes you, not with loving concern for your correction, but with the malice of an enemy. Moreover, although, since every earthly possession can be rightly retained only on the ground either of divine right, according to which all things belong to the righteous, or of human right, which is in the jurisdiction of the kings of the earth, you are mistaken in calling those things yours which you do not possess as righteous persons and which you have forfeited by the laws of earthly sovereigns, and plead in vain, "We have laboured to gather them," seeing that you may read what is written, "The wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just" (Prov. 13:22); nevertheless we disapprove of any one who, availing himself of this law which the kings of the earth, doing homage to Christ, have published in order to correct your impiety, covetously seeks to possess himself of your property. Also we disapprove of any one who, on the ground not of justice but of avarice, seizes and retains the provision pertaining to the poor, or the chapels in which you meet for worship, which you once occupied in the name of the church, and which are by all means the rightful property only of that church which is the true church of Christ. We disapprove of any one who receives a person that has been expelled by you for some disgraceful action or crime on the same terms on which those are received who have lived among you chargeable with no other crime beyond the error through which you are separated from us. But these are things which you cannot easily prove; and although you can prove them, we bear with some whom we are unable to correct or even to punish; and we do not quit the Lord's threshing-floor because of the chaff which is there, nor break the Lord's net because of the bad fishes enclosed therein, nor desert the Lord's flock because of goats which are to be in the end separated from it, nor go forth from the Lord's house because in it there are vessels destined to dishonour.

Letter 189

To Boniface, my noble lord and justly distinguished and honourable son, Augustine sends greetings in the Lord:

I had already written a reply to Your Charity, but while I was waiting for an opportunity of forwarding the letter, my beloved son Faustus arrived here on his way to Your Excellency. After he had received the letter which I had intended to be carried by him to Your Benevolence, he stated to me that you were very desirous that I should write you something which might build you up unto the eternal salvation of which you have hope in Christ Jesus our Lord. And, although I was busily occupied

at the time, he insisted, with an earnestness corresponding to the love which, as you know, he bears to you, that I should do this without delay. To meet his convenience, therefore, as he was in haste to depart, I thought it better to write, though necessarily without much time for reflection, rather than put off the gratification of your pious desire, my noble lord and justly distinguished and honourable son.

All is contained in these brief sentences: "Love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy strength, and love thy neighbour as thyself"; for these are the words in which the Lord, when on earth, gave an epitome of religion, saying in the gospel, "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matt. 22:37-40). Daily advance, then, in this love, both by praying and by well-doing, that through the help of him who enjoined it on you and whose gift it is it may be nourished and increased until, being perfected, it render you perfect. "For this is the love which," as the apostle says, "is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Rom. 5:5). This is the "fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13:10); this is the same love by which faith works, of which he says again: "Neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love" (Gal. 5:6).

In this love, then, all our holy fathers, patriarchs, prophets and apostles pleased God. In this all true martyrs contended against the devil even to the shedding of blood, and because in them it neither waxed cold nor failed, they became conquerors. In this all true believers daily make progress, seeking to acquire not an earthly kingdom but the kingdom of heaven, not a temporal but an eternal inheritance, not gold and silver but the uncorruptible riches of the angels, not the good things of this life, which are enjoyed with trembling and which no one can take with him when he dies, but the vision of God, whose grace and power of imparting felicity transcend all beauty of form in bodies not only on earth but also in heaven, transcend all spiritual loveliness in men, however just and holy, transcend all the glory of the angels and powers of the world above, transcend not only all that language can express but all that thought can imagine concerning him. And let us not despair of the fulfilment of such a great promise because it is exceeding great, but rather believe that we shall receive it because he who has promised it is exceeding great, as the blessed apostle John says, "Now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is" (1 John 3:2).

Do not think that it is impossible for any one to please God while engaged in active military service. Among such persons was the holy David, to whom God gave so great a testimony; among them also were many righteous men of that time; among them was also that centurion who said to the Lord: "I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof, but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed; for I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me, and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth, and to another, Come, and he cometh, and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it"; and concerning whom the Lord said: "Verily, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel" (Matt. 8:8-10). Among them was that Cornelius to whom an angel said: "Cornelius, thine alms are accepted, and thy prayers are heard," when he directed him to send to the blessed apostle Peter and to

hear from him what he ought to do, to which apostle he sent a devout soldier, requesting him to come to him (Acts 10:4). Among them were also the soldiers who, when they had come to be baptised by John — the sacred forerunner of the Lord, and the "friend of the bridegroom" of whom the Lord says: "Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist" (Matt. 11:11) — and had inquired of him what they should do, received the answer, "Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your wages" (Luke 3:14). Certainly he did not prohibit them to serve as soldiers when he commanded them to be content with their pay for the service.

They occupy, indeed, a higher place before God who, abandoning all these secular employments, serve him with the strictest chastity; but "every one," as the apostle says, "hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner and another after that" (1 Cor. 7:7). Some, then, in praying for you, fight against your invisible enemies; you, in fighting for them, contend against the barbarians, their visible enemies. Would that one faith existed in all, for then there would be less weary struggling, and the devil with his angels would be more easily conquered! But since it is necessary in this life that the citizens of the kingdom of heaven should be subjected to temptations among erring and impious men, that they may be exercised and "tried as gold in the furnace" (Sap. 3:6), we ought not before the appointed time to desire to live with those alone who are holy and righteous, so that by patience we may deserve to receive this blessedness in its proper time.

Think, then, of this first of all, when you are arming for the battle, that even your bodily strength is a gift of God; for considering this, you will not employ the gift of God against God. For when faith is pledged it is to be kept, even with the enemy against whom the war is waged. How much more with the friend for whom the battle is fought! Peace should be the object of your desire; war should be waged only as a necessity, and waged only that God may by it deliver men from the necessity and preserve them in peace. For peace is not sought in order to kindle war, but war is waged in order that peace may be obtained. Therefore even in waging war cherish the spirit of a peacemaker, that by conquering those whom you attack you may lead them back to the advantages of peace; for our Lord says: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God" (Matt. 5:9). If, however, peace among men be so sweet as procuring temporal safety, how much sweeter is that peace with God which procures for men the eternal felicity of the angels! Let necessity, therefore, and not your will slay the enemy who fights against you. As violence is used towards him who rebels and resists, so mercy is due to the vanquished or the captive, especially in the case in which future troubling of the peace is not to be feared.

Let the manner of your life be adorned by chastity, sobriety and moderation; for it is exceedingly disgraceful that lust should subdue him whom man finds invincible, and that wine should overpower him whom the sword assails in vain. As to worldly riches, if you do not possess them, let them not be sought after on earth by doing evil; and if you possess them, let them by good works be laid up in heaven. The manly and Christian spirit ought neither to be elated by the accession, nor crushed by the loss of this world's treasures. Let us rather think of what the Lord says:

"Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:21); and certainly when we hear the exhortation to lift up our hearts, it is our duty to give unfeignedly the response which you know that we are accustomed to give.

In these things, indeed, I know that you are very careful, and the good report which I hear of you fills me with great delight, and moves me to congratulate you on account of it in the Lord. This letter, therefore, may serve rather as a mirror in which you may see what you are than as a directory from which to learn what you ought to be; nevertheless, whatever you may discover either from this letter or from the Holy Scriptures to be still wanting to you in regard to a holy life, persevere in urgently seeking it both by effort and by prayer; and for the things which you have, give thanks to God as the fountain of goodness whence you have received them; in every good action let the glory be given to God and humility be exercised by you, for, as it is written: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the father of lights" (James 1:17). But however much you may advance in the love of God and of your neighbour and in true piety, do not imagine as long as you are in this life that you are without sin, for concerning this we read in Holy Scripture: "Is not the life of man upon earth a life of temptation?" (Job 7:1 Septuagint). Wherefore, since always as long as you are in this body it is necessary for you to say in prayer, as the Lord taught us, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" (Matt. 6:12), remember quickly to forgive if any one shall do you wrong and shall ask pardon from you, that you may be able to pray sincerely and may prevail in seeking pardon for your own sins.

These things, my beloved friend, I have written to you in haste, as the anxiety of the bearer to depart urged me not to detain him; but I thank God that I have in some measure complied with your pious wish. May the mercy of God ever protect you, my noble lord and justly distinguished son.

Translation: J. G. Cunningham, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, ser. 1, vol. 1, adapted.

From *Letter* 24*

To Eustochius, my distinguished lord and justly honourable and greatly longed for son, from Augustine: greetings in the Lord.

Since to all who seek your counsel you owe in good faith a truthful response, how much more to us ministers of Christ, by faith in whom you are one of the faithful in the hope of receiving that inheritance whose testament, my distinguished lord and justly honourable and greatly longed for son, is the Gospel. Because the apostle has laid down that legal actions between Christians over earthly concerns should take place not in court but in church, we accordingly have to cope with the kind of arguments from complainants that require from us judgments even in terms of secular law, especially concerning the temporal status of people — for we can enjoin slaves, in keeping with the apostolic discipline, to be subject to their masters, but we cannot inflict the yoke of slavery on free persons. I therefore request your most gen-

uine charity kindly to instruct me in the procedure to be followed with individuals born to a free mother and a slave father. I am already aware that the offspring of a slave woman and a free man are slaves by birth.

How does it stand also with those whose fathers sell their labour for a fixed number of years? I ask particularly whether, once their fathers who sold them are deceased, they are compelled to complete the same number of years or instead are released by the death of those who sold them — or rather hired them out a certain way — since they now begin to be, as is said, legally independent. I also ask whether free fathers can sell their sons into permanent slavery, and whether mothers can sell even their sons' labour. Again I ask whether, if a tenant farmworker *(colonus)* sells his son, as a father is permitted to do, the purchaser has a superior right over the one sold than the master of the estate where the tenant originally belongs. And is it lawful for such a proprietor to turn his tenants or their sons into slaves?

Furthermore, what has been clearly determined by the jurists or the laws concerning managers *(actores)?* It seems to me very harsh that a person's freeborn status should be prejudiced by his own advantage. Free men are often invited to become managers and imagine that they advantage themselves in doing as requested — and in reality they do, to the extent of gaining the gratitude of the person inviting them if he succeeds in obtaining their compliance. If as a result of benefitting himself in this way a free man is made a slave, nobody knowing this would on any account accept — nor would anyone have the audacity to ask someone who knew. Nevertheless I am disturbed by certain constitutions drawn to my notice when just such a case was referred to us concerning the sons of a man who perhaps will be proved to have been a manager. But I do not want to require the claimant to prove it without first knowing what course to pursue if he succeeds in proving it. I have accordingly sent these same constitutions for Your Excellency's evaluation. Two of them, I judge, speak to this very issue, but the rest either I do not understand or else they are entirely irrelevant to the question in dispute. I beg you to assist me despite my absence, just as you are accustomed to do when I am present.

Translation: David F. Wright, from *Lettres 1*-29**, ed. Johannes Divjak, Oeuvres de Saint Augustin, vol. 46b (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1987).

From *City of God,* Book 2

20. Yet the worshipers and devotees of those divinities, who take satisfaction, too, in being their imitators when it comes to criminal adventures, are unconcerned that the commonwealth degenerates into an abyss of crime. "So long as it survives," they say, "so long as it prospers, rich in resources, self-confident in victory, or, better still, secure in peace, what difference does it make to us? What matters is that there is money to be made to support our lavish style of life, and to give the stronger their hold over the weaker; that the poor treat the wealthy with compliance, to ensure their daily bread — the poor depending on the patronage of the wealthy for a quiet

life, the wealthy calling on the poor for support to boost their public standing. Popularity should accrue not to those whose policies promote public welfare, but to the big providers of public entertainment. Law should not be rigorous; low indulgences should not be proscribed. Rulers should not bother themselves with getting virtuous subjects, simply quiescent ones. Territories should view their rulers not in the light of moral educators, merely as economic managers and purveyors of satisfactions. It does not matter if they do not seriously respect them, so long as they treat them with a calculating and subservient fear. Law should prohibit economic harm to our neighbors, not moral harm to ourselves. No one should be liable to court proceedings if he has not infringed on or done harm to the property, real estate, or physical safety of another person without consent; but everyone should be free to do with himself, his dependents, and consenting associates exactly what he likes. Sexual satisfactions should be freely available on the open market for those who want them, especially those who cannot afford to maintain facilities privately. Domestic architecture should be expansive and ornate, to accommodate large and lavish parties where anyone may game and drink all day and night, if he pleases, till he brings it up or sweats it out. The sound of dancing should be heard in every neighborhood, and theaters should be humming with excitement at their coarse amusements and their various brash and bloodthirsty entertainments. Should someone disapprove of this perfect contentment, he must expect to meet public hostility; and should someone attempt to reform or abolish it, the spirit of popular freedom must know what to do with him: shut him up, pack him up, beat him up! Religion ought to make a case for itself by guaranteeing and perpetuating these conditions of life for the greatest number of people. Let the gods have all the worship they want, and all the games that they want, to enjoy them with (and at the expense of) their worshipers, just so long as they ensure this satisfactory state of affairs against threat from enemy, plague, or disaster."

Translation: Editors, from Bibliothèque Augustinienne.

From *City of God,* Book 4

3. Is it reasonable, is it sensible, to boast of the extent and grandeur of empire, when you cannot show that men lived in happiness, as they passed their lives amid the horrors of war, amid the shedding of men's blood — whether the blood of enemies or fellow citizens — under the shadow of fear and amid the terror of ruthless ambition? The only joy to be attained had the fragile brilliance of glass, a joy outweighed by the fear that it may be shattered in a moment.

To help us form our judgment let us refuse to be fooled by empty bombast, to let the edge of our critical faculties be blunted by high-sounding words like "peoples," "realms," "provinces." Let us set before our mind's eye two men; for the individual man is, like a single letter in a statement, an element, as it were, out of which a community or a realm is built up, however vast its territorial possessions. Let us

imagine one of the two to be poor, or, better, in a middle station of life, while the other is excessively rich. But the rich man is tortured by fears, worn out with sadness, burnt up with ambition, never knowing serenity of repose, always panting and sweating in his struggles with opponents. It may be true that he enormously swells his patrimony, but at the cost of those discontents, while by this increase he heaps up a load of further anxiety and bitterness. The other man, the ordinary citizen, is content with his strictly limited resources. He is loved by family and friends; he enjoys the blessing of peace with his relations, neighbours and friends; he is loyal, compassionate, and kind, healthy in body, temperate in habits, of unblemished character, and enjoys the serenity of a good conscience. I do not think anyone would be fool enough to hesitate about which he would prefer.

It is the same with two families, two peoples, or two realms. The same canon of judgment applies as in the case of the two men. If we apply the canon scrupulously, without allowing our judgment to be warped, we shall not have slightest difficulty in seeing where true happiness lies, and where an empty show. And therefore it is beneficial that the good should extend their dominion far and wide, and that their reign should endure, with the worship of the true God by genuine sacrifices and upright lives. This is for the benefit of all, of the subjects even more than the rulers. For the rulers, their piety and integrity — great gifts of God — suffice for true happiness, for a good life on earth, and for eternal life hereafter. And in this world the reign of the good is a blessing for themselves, and even more for the whole of human society. In contrast, the reign of the wicked is more harmful to those who wield the power, who bring destruction on their own souls through the greater scope thus given for their misdeeds, whereas those who are enslaved beneath them are harmed only by their own wickedness. For the evils inflicted on the righteous by their wicked masters are not punishments for crime but tests of virtue. The good man, though a slave, is free; the wicked, though he reigns, is a slave, and not the slave of a single man, but — what is far worse — the slave of as many masters as he has vices. It is in reference to vices that the scripture says: "When a man is vanquished he becomes the bond-slave of his conqueror" (2 Pet. 2:19).

4. Remove justice, and what are kingdoms but gangs of criminals on a large scale? What are criminal gangs but petty kingdoms? A gang is a group of men under the command of a leader, bound by a compact of association, in which the plunder is divided according to an agreed convention.

If this villainy wins so many recruits from the ranks of the demoralized that it acquires territory, establishes a base, captures cities and subdues peoples, it then openly arrogates to itself the title of kingdom, which is conferred on it in the eyes of the world not by the renouncing of aggression but by the attainment of impunity.

For it was a witty and a truthful rejoinder which was given by a captured pirate to Alexander the Great. The king asked the fellow, "What is your idea, in infesting the sea?" And the pirate answered, with uninhibited insolence, "The same as yours, in infesting the earth! But because I do it with a tiny craft, I'm called a pirate; because you have a mighty navy, you're called an emperor."

5. I shall not discuss the question of what kind of people Romulus collected; it is known that he took measures to ensure that when they were granted a share in the

community after abandoning their former way of life, they should no longer have to think about the punishment to which they were liable, the fear of which had impelled them to greater crimes, so that in the future they should be less aggressive in their attitude to society.

What I want to say is that when the Roman Empire was already great, when she had subjugated many nations and was feared by all the rest, this great empire was bitterly distressed and deeply alarmed, and had the utmost difficulty in extricating herself from the threat of overwhelming disaster, when a tiny handful of gladiators in Campania escaped from the training-school and collected a large army. Under three commanders [Spartacus, Oenomaus, Crixus] they wrought cruel havoc over a wide area of Italy. Would our opponents tell us the name of the god who assisted them, so that from a small and contemptible gang of thugs they developed into a "kingdom" inspiring fear in the Romans, for all Rome's great resources and all her strongholds? Are they going to say they did not receive divine help because they did not last long [73-71 B.C.]? Come now, no man's life is very long! On this argument the gods never help any man to a throne, since individuals soon die; and one should not count something a benefit which vanishes like smoke in the case of each man — and so, to be sure, in all, as one individual succeeds another. What does it matter to those who worshipped the gods under Romulus, and died so long ago, that after their death the Roman Empire grew to such greatness, since they have to plead their cause in the world below? Whether their cause be good or bad is not relevant to our argument. The same consideration applies to all those who in the few days of the rapid course of their lives have wielded temporary power in the Roman Empire. However long the extension of that empire's duration, as the generations succeed one another in their rise and fall, those individuals have passed on, taking with them the bundle of their deeds.

Now if even the benefits of the briefest space of time are to be attributed to the help of the gods, those gladiators received no inconsiderable assistance. They broke the chains of their servile condition; they escaped; they got clean away; they collected a large and formidable army; and in obedience to the plans and orders of their "kings" they became an object of dread to the soaring might of Rome. They were more than a match for many Roman generals; they captured much booty; they gained many victories; they indulged themselves at will, following the prompting of every desire; in fact, they lived in all the grandeur of kings, until their eventual defeat, which was only achieved with the greatest difficulty.

Translation: Henry Bettenson (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972). Used with permission.

From *City of God,* Book 5

24. When we describe certain Christian emperors as "happy," it is not because they enjoyed long reigns, or because they died a peaceful death, leaving the throne to

their sons; nor is it because they subdued their country's enemies, or had the power to forestall insurrections by enemies in their own land and to suppress such insurrections if they arose. All these and other similar rewards or consolations in this life of trouble were granted to some of the worshippers of demons, as their due; and yet those pagan rulers have no connection with the Kingdom of God, to which those Christian rulers belong. Their good fortune was due to the mercy of God; for it was God's intention that those who believe in him should not demand such blessings from him as if they represented the highest good.

We Christians call rulers happy if they rule with justice; if amid the voices of exalted praise and the reverent salutations of excessive humility, they are not inflated with pride, but remember that they are but men; if they put their power at the service of God's majesty, to extend his worship far and wide; if they fear God, love him and worship him; if, more than their earthly kingdom, they love that realm where they do not fear to share the kingship; if they are slow to punish, but ready to pardon; if they take vengeance on wrong because of the necessity to direct and protect the state and not to satisfy their personal animosity; if they grant pardon not to allow impunity to wrong-doing but in hope of amendment of the wrong-doer; if, when they are obliged to take severe decisions, as must often happen, they compensate this with the gentleness of their mercy and the generosity of their benefits; if they restrain their self-indulgent appetites all the more because they are more free to gratify them, and prefer to have command over their lower desires than over any number of subject peoples; and if they do all this not for a burning desire for empty glory, but for the love of eternal blessedness; and if they do not fail to offer to their true God, as a sacrifice for their sins, the oblation of humility, compassion and prayer.

It is Christian emperors of this kind whom we call happy; happy in hope, during this present life, and to be happy in reality hereafter, when what we wait for will have come to pass.

25. God, in his goodness, did not wish that those who believed he was to be worshipped for the sake of life eternal, should suppose that no one could attain to the highest stations and the kingdoms of this world unless he made his supplications to demons, on the ground that those evil spirits have great power in this sphere. And for that reason he heaped worldly gifts such as no one would have dared to hope for, on Constantine, who made no supplication to demons, but worshipped only the true God. And God even granted him the honour of founding a city, associated with the Roman Empire, the daughter, one might say, of Rome herself, but a city which contained not a single temple or image of any demon. Constantine had a long reign [306-37], and as the sole Augustus he ruled and defended the whole Roman world; he was victorious above all others in the wars which he directed and conducted; fortune favoured his efforts in the repression of usurpers; and he died of sickness and old age after a long life, leaving the throne to his sons.

On the other hand, so that no emperor should become a Christian in order to earn the good fortune of Constantine (whereas it is only with a view to life eternal that anyone should be a Christian), God removed Jovian [363-64] more quickly than Julian [the Apostate, 361-63]; he allowed Gratian [367-83] to be slain by the

usurper's sword — but in far less painful circumstances than attended the murder of the great Pompey, who worshipped the pretended gods of Rome. For Pompey could not be avenged by Cato, whom he had, as it were, made his heir to the Civil War; while Gratian was avenged by Theodosius [379-95] — although pious souls do not look for such consolation — whom Gratian had taken as a partner in his rule, although he had a young brother. Gratian was more concerned to have a trustworthy associate than to enjoy excessive power.

26. [. . .] Men like Cinna, Marius and Sulla wished the civil strife to continue when the wars were ended. Very different was Theodosius; far from wanting any harm to come to anyone after the end of civil war, he was deeply grieved that such conflicts should ever break out. Among all these anxieties Theodosius, from the beginning of his reign, never relaxed his endeavours to help the church against the ungodly by just and compassionate legislation; and the church at that time was in difficulties, for the heretic Valens [364-78] had dealt her heavy blows in his support of the Arians. Theodosius was more glad to be a member of that church than to be ruler of the world. He ordered the demolition of pagan images, knowing that even this world's prizes are not in the gift of demons, but in the power of the true God.

But nothing could be more wonderful than the religious humility he showed after the grievous crime committed by the people of Thessalonica [390: the mob murdered the governor, Botheric, and other officials after the imprisonment of a popular charioteer]. On the intercession of the bishops he had promised a pardon; but then the clamour of certain of his close supporters drove him to avenge the crime [in a massacre]. But he was constrained by the discipline of the church to do penance in such a fashion that the people of Thessalonica, as they prayed for him, wept at seeing the imperial highness thus prostrate, with an emotion stronger than their fears of the emperor's wrath at their offence. These and other good works of like nature, which it would take too long to recount, Theodosius took with him when he left the loftiest summit of power — which is nothing but a passing mist. The reward of those works is eternal happiness; God is the giver; and the only recipients are the truly devout. But all the rest that this world offers, whether the peaks of power or the bare necessities of life, God dispenses freely to good and evil alike — just as he gives to all alike the world, the light, the air, earth and water and the fruits of earth, and man's soul, body, senses, intelligence, and life. Among those gifts is dominion, of whatever extent; and this God bestows in accordance with his government of temporal affairs.

Translation: Henry Bettenson (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972). Used with permission.

From *City of God,* Book 14

28. We see then that the two cities were created by two kinds of love: the earthly city was created by self-love reaching the point of contempt for God, the heavenly city by

the love of God carried as far as contempt of self. In fact, the earthly city glories in itself, the heavenly City glories in the Lord. The former looks for glory from men, the latter finds its highest glory in God, the witness of a good conscience. The earthly lifts up its head in its own glory, the heavenly city says to its God: "My glory; you lift up my head" (Ps. 3:3). In the former, the lust for domination lords it over its princes as over the nations it subjugates; in the other both those put in authority and those subject to them serve one another in love, the rulers by their counsel, the subjects by obedience. The one city loves its own strength shown in its powerful leaders; the other says to its God, "I will love you, my Lord, my strength" (Ps. 18:1).

Consequently, in the earthly city its wise men who live by men's standards have pursued the goods of the body or of their own mind, or of both. Or those of them who were able to know God "did not honour him as God, nor did they give thanks to him, but they dwindled into futility in their thoughts, and their senseless heart was darkened; in asserting their wisdom" — that is, exalting themselves in their wisdom, under the domination of pride — "they became foolish, and changed the glory of the imperishable God into an image representing a perishable man, or birds or beasts or reptiles" — for in the adoration of idols of this kind they were either leaders or followers of the general public — "and they worshipped and served created things instead of the Creator, who is blessed for ever" (Rom. 1:21-25). In the Heavenly City, on the other hand, man's only wisdom is the devotion which rightly worships the true God, and looks for its reward in the fellowship of the saints, not only holy men but also holy angels, "so that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. 15:28).

From *City of God,* Book 15

1. [. . .] I classify the human race into two branches: the one consists of those who live by human standards, the other of those who live according to God's will. I also call these two classes the two cities, speaking allegorically. By two cities *(civitates)* I mean two societies *(societates)* of human beings, one of which is predestined to reign with God for all eternity, the other doomed to undergo eternal punishment with the Devil. But this is their final destiny, and I shall have to speak of that later on. At present, since I have said enough about the origins of these societies, whether in the angels, whose number is unknown to us, or in the two first human beings, it seems to me that I should undertake to describe their development from the time when that first pair began to produce offspring up to the time when mankind will cease to reproduce itself. For the development of these two societies which form my subject lasts throughout this whole stretch of time, or era, in which the dying yield place to the newly-born who succeed them.

Now Cain was the first son born to those two parents of mankind, and he belonged to the city of man; the later son, Abel, belonged to the City of God. It is our own experience that in the individual man, to use the words of the Apostle, "it is not the spiritual element which comes first, but the animal; and afterwards comes the spiritual" (1 Cor. 15:46), and so it is that everyone, since he takes his origin from a

condemned stock, is inevitably evil and carnal to begin with, by derivation from Adam; but if he is reborn into Christ, and makes progress, he will afterwards be good and spiritual. The same holds true of the whole human race. When those two cities started on their course through the succession of birth and death, the first to be born was a citizen of this world, and later appeared one who was a pilgrim and stranger in the world, belonging as he did to the City of God. He was predestined by grace, and chosen by grace, by grace a pilgrim below, and by grace a citizen above. As far as he himself is concerned he has his origin from the same lump which was condemned, as a whole lump, at the beginning. But God like a potter (the analogy introduced by the Apostle is not impertinent but very pertinent) made "out of the same lump one vessel destined for honour, and another for dishonour" (Rom. 9:21). But the first one made was the vessel for dishonour, and afterwards came the vessel for honour. For in the individual man, as I have said, the base condition comes first, and we have to start with that; but we are not bound to stop at that, and later comes the noble state towards which we may make progress, and in which we may abide, when we have arrived at it. Hence it is not the case that every bad man will become good, but no one will be good who was not bad originally. Yet the sooner a man changes for the better the more quickly will he secure for himself the title belonging to his attainment and will hide his earlier appellation under the later name.

Scripture tells us that Cain founded a city (Gen. 4:17), whereas Abel, as a pilgrim, did not found one. For the city of the saints is up above, although it produces citizens here below, and in their persons the city is on pilgrimage until the time of its kingdom comes. At that time it will assemble all those citizens as they rise again in their bodies; and then they will be given the promised kingdom, where with their Prince, "the king of ages" (1 Tim. 1:17), they will reign world without end.

2. There was certainly a kind of shadow and prophetic image of this city which served rather to point towards it than to reproduce it on earth at the time when it was due to be displayed. This image was also called the holy city, in virtue of its pointing to that other city, not as being the express likeness of the reality which is yet to be. Concerning this image, in its status as a servant, and that free city to which it points, the Apostle says, when writing to the Galatians (4:21–5:1):

> Now tell me, you who want to be under law; have you not listened to what the Law says? We are told in Scripture that Abraham had two sons, one by a slave-woman, one by his free-born wife. The slave-woman's son was born in the course of nature, the free woman's as a result of a promise. These facts are allegorical. For the two women stand for two covenants. The one bearing children for slavery is the covenant from Mount Sinai; this is Hagar. Now Sinai is a mountain in Arabia and it stands for the present Jerusalem; for she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem above is free; and she is our mother. For Scripture says: "Rejoice, you barren woman who bear no child: break into a cry of joy, you who are not in labour; for the deserted woman has many sons, more than the woman who has a husband" (Isa. 54:1). Now we, my brothers, are sons of the promise, as Isaac was. But just as at that time the son who was born in the course of nature persecuted the son who was spiritually born, so it is now. But what does Scripture say? "Send away the slave

> woman and her son; for the son of the slave shall not be joint-heir with the son of the free woman" (Gen. 21:10). Thus you see, brothers, that we are not the sons of a slave-woman, but of the free woman, by reason of the freedom brought us by Christ's liberation.

This manner of interpretation, which comes down to us with apostolic authority, reveals to us how we are to understand the Scriptures of the two covenants, the old and the new. One part of the earthly city has been made into an image of the heavenly city, by symbolizing something other than itself, namely that other city; and for that reason it is a servant. For it was established not for its own sake but in order to symbolize another city; and since it was signified by an antecedent symbol, the foreshadowing symbol was itself foreshadowed. Hagar, the servant of Sarah, represented, with her son, the image of this image. But the shadows were to pass away with the coming of the light, and Sarah, the free woman, stood for the free city which the shadow, Hagar, for her part served to point to in another way. And that is why Sarah said, "Send away the slave-woman and her son; for the son of the slave shall not be joint-heir with my son Isaac," or as the Apostle puts it, "with the son of the free woman."

Thus we find in the earthly city a double significance; in one respect it displays its own presence, and in the other it serves by its presence to signify the heavenly city. But the citizens of the earthly city are produced by a nature which is vitiated by sin, while the citizens of the heavenly city are brought forth by grace, which sets nature free from sin. That is why the former are called "vessels of wrath," the latter "vessels of mercy" (Rom. 9:22-23). This difference is also symbolized in Abraham's two sons: the one, Ishmael, son of the slave named Hagar, was born in the course of nature, whereas the other, Isaac, son of Sarah, the free woman, was born in fulfilment of a promise. Both sons, it is true, were born of Abraham's seed; but one was begotten by the normal procedure, a demonstration of nature's way, while the other was given by a promise, a symbol of God's grace. In one case we are shown man's customary behaviour, in the other we are given a revelation of the goodness of God. 3. [. . .] Isaac therefore, who was born as a result of a promise, is rightly interpreted as symbolizing the children of grace, the citizens of the free city, the sharers in eternal peace, who form a community where there is no love of a will that is personal and, as we may say, private, but a love that rejoices in a good that is at once shared by all and unchanging — a love that makes "one heart" out of many (Acts 4:32); a love that is the whole-hearted and harmonious obedience of mutual affection.

4. The earthly city will not be everlasting; for when it is condemned to the final punishment it will no longer be a city. It has its good in this world, and rejoices to participate in it with such gladness as can be derived from things of such a kind. And since this is not the kind of good that causes no frustrations to those enamoured of it, the earthly city is generally divided against itself by litigation, by wars, by battles, by the pursuit of victories that bring death with them or at best are doomed to death. For if any section of that city has risen up in war against another part, it seeks to be victorious over other nations, though it is itself the slave of base passions; and if, when victorious, it is exalted in its arrogance, that victory brings death in its train.

Whereas if it considers the human condition and the changes and chances common to mankind, and is more tormented by possible misfortunes than puffed up by its present success, then its victory is only doomed to death. For it will not be able to lord it permanently over those whom it has been able to subdue victoriously.

However, it would be incorrect to say that the goods which this city desires are not goods, since even that city is better, in its own human way, by their possession. For example, that city desires an earthly peace, for the sake of the lowest goods; and it is that peace which it longs to attain by making war. For if it wins the war and no one survives to resist, then there will be peace, which the warring sections did not enjoy when they contended in their unhappy poverty for the things which they could not both possess at the same time. This peace is the aim of wars, with all their hardships; it is this peace that glorious victory (so called) achieves.

Now when the victory goes to those who were fighting for the juster cause, can anyone doubt that the victory is a matter for rejoicing and the resulting peace is something to be desired? Those things are goods and undoubtedly they are gifts of God. But if the higher goods are neglected, which belong to the city on high, where victory will be serene in the enjoyment of eternal and perfect peace — if these goods are neglected and those other goods are so desired as to be considered the only goods, or are loved more than the goods which are believed to be higher, the inevitable consequence is fresh misery, and an increase of the wretchedness already there.

5. The first founder of the earthly city was, as we have seen, a fratricide; for, overcome by envy, he slew his own brother, a citizen of the eternal city, on pilgrimage in this world. Hence it is no wonder that long afterwards this first precedent — what the Greeks call an *archetype* — was answered by a kind of reflection, by an event of the same kind at the founding of the city which was to be the capital of the earthly city of which we are speaking, and was to rule over so many peoples. For there also, as one of their poets says when he mentions the crime,

> Those walls were dripping with a brother's blood.
>
> Lucan, *Pharsalia* 1.95

For this is how Rome was founded, when Remus, as Roman history witnesses, was slain by his brother Romulus. The difference from the primal crime was that both brothers were citizens of the earthly city. Both sought the glory of establishing the Roman state, but a joint foundation would not bring to each the glory that a single founder would enjoy. Anyone whose aim was to glory in the exercise of power would obviously enjoy less power if his sovereignty was diminished by a living partner. Therefore, in order that the sole power should be wielded by one person, the partner was eliminated; and what would have been kept smaller and better by innocence grew through crime into something bigger and worse.

In contrast, the earlier brothers, Cain and Abel, did not both entertain the same ambition for earthly gains; and the one who slew his brother was not jealous of him because his power would be more restricted if both wielded the sovereignty; for Abel did not aim at power in the city which his brother was founding.

But Cain's was the diabolical envy that the wicked feel for the good simply because they are good, while they themselves are evil. A man's possession of goodness is in no way diminished by the arrival, or the continuance, of a sharer in it; indeed, goodness is a possession enjoyed more widely by the united affection of partners in that possession in proportion to the harmony that exists among them. In fact, anyone who refuses to enjoy this possession in partnership will not enjoy it at all; and he will find that he possesses it in ampler measure in proportion to his ability to love his partner in it.

Thus the quarrel that arose between Remus and Romulus demonstrated the division of the earthly city against itself; while the conflict between Cain and Abel displayed the hostility between the two cities themselves, the City of God and the city of men. Thus the wicked fight among themselves; and likewise the wicked fight against the good and the good against the wicked. But the good, if they have reached perfect goodness, cannot fight among themselves. However, while they are on their way towards the perfection they have not yet attained, there may be fighting among them insasmuch as any good man may fight against another as a result of that part of him which makes him also fight against himself. And in the individual it is true that "the flesh has desires which resist the spirit, and the spirit has desires which resist the flesh" (Gal. 5:17). Accordingly, spiritual desire can fight against the carnal desire of another person, or carnal desire against another's spiritual desire, just as the good and the wicked fight against one another. Or even the carnal desires of two good men (who have obviously not yet attained perfection) may fight, just as the wicked fight among themselves, until those who are on the way to recovery are finally brought to triumphant health.

Translation: Henry Bettenson (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972). Used with permission.

From *City of God*, Book 19

[Augustine has reviewed the survey of different schools of philosophy and their views on the supreme good presented by the first-century Roman author Varro, and has taken as the agenda for his discussion the five variables which Varro identifies: *(a)* what the supreme good is held to be; *(b)* how virtue is related to the natural goods within it; *(c)* whether it is social; *(d)* whether it is held as a dogmatic certainty or as a hypothesis; *(e)* whether the school that maintains it is distinguished by idiosyncratic dress or customs. In chapter 4 he has announced the Christian answer to the first two of these questions: the supreme good, Christians believe, is eternal life; it cannot be enjoyed by pure virtue within the evil conditions of this world, but supposes a state of circumstantial blessedness and immortality as well as virtue. He now turns to a lengthy discussion of the third question: whether the supreme good can be achieved by solitary individuals or must be social.]

5. Now we turn to the view that "the wise man's life is social," which we can support — and much more strongly than they do! Here we are with the nineteenth book of the *City of God* in our hands, and how could that city ever set out, advance or reach its appointed end if the life of the saints were not social? But within the care-laden conditions of this mortal life human society brims over with evils too numerous, too extensive to be told.

Consider this line from a pagan comedy — it is a commonplace which is grasped instinctively:

> Married a wife. That was a curse.
> Then came the kids. They made it worse.
>
> (*The Brothers* 5.4.13)

And the same comedian, Terence, has an observation on the unhappy course of love:

> Cheating, rows and fights, and then
> Half an hour of peace again.
>
> (*The Eunuch* 1.1.14)

Isn't this the tale of human experience? Doesn't it happen in the best and most affectionate relationships? Don't we find "cheating, rows and fights," in fact, entirely predictable in every sphere of human life? Peace, on the other hand, is quite unpredictable, since we do not know the hearts of those with whom we wish to be at peace; and if we knew them today, we would certainly not know how they would stand tomorrow. Where, then, might we reasonably expect to find true affection, if not among members of a single *household?* Yet who can feel secure from unpleasant surprises, all too frequently sprung on us from that quarter? And these are the harder to bear when we have valued our domestic peace so highly as to place confidence in what turns out to be no more than a carefully manicured appearance! Cicero's words strike a chord, and always elicit a murmur of sympathy: "No trap is harder to detect than that which lies concealed behind apparent loyalty or family connection. The open enemy, with care, can be avoided. But the threat from within the walls, the hidden threat from the domestic hearth, is upon us and overpowers us before we see it coming and take its measure" (*Verrine Orations* 2.1.13). So, too, the text of Holy Scripture, "A man's foes shall be those of his own household" (Matt. 10:36), sounds a depressing note. One may be strong enough to face without illusion the machinations of those who assume a pose of friendship, alert enough to keep one's guard against them; yet for a good man to discover malice in that quarter, whether it was always there disguised or whether it grew up where there was once good will, is inevitably an immensely painful thing.

If the household, our common refuge from the ills of humankind, offers no safety, what can we say of the *city?* Its larger scale affords a larger scope for disputes in criminal and civil courts, to say nothing of civil discords — civil bloodshed and civil war, as they too frequently become — which may lie quiet for a spell but are always menacing possibilities. 6. And what of the courts themselves, never absent from

the city's life, however peaceful? What idea can we form of the pitiable predicament of men who sit in judgment on other men without being able to read their consciences? They are often forced to interrogate the innocent under torture: witnesses not party to the case, or a defendant pleading innocence, making him pay for an unproven crime an all too proven penalty, not because he has been shown to have done the deed, but because he has not been shown not to have! It is the innocent for whom the judge's ignorance spells disaster. And there is worse to come, to drive one nearer to distraction, if you can imagine it, and to make one dissolve into tears. To establish the defense, the judge may commit the defendant to be tortured, meaning to avoid the mistake of killing an innocent man; yet the outcome of his wretched blunder may be that he kills him, innocent *and* tortured! For his victim may prefer, in keeping with Stoic philosophy, to leave this life rather than endure the torture any longer, and so may confess to a crime he has not committed. Sentence pronounced, execution carried out, the judge is as ignorant as ever whether the man he killed was innocent or guilty, though he tortured him precisely to avoid the miscarriage of killing an innocent man. To make sure of his innocence, he had him tortured; then had him put to death because he wasn't sure!

With life in society cloaked in this kind of obscurity, will the philosophers' "wise man" take the responsibility of being a judge, or will he shy off? Clearly, he will take the responsibility. For the ties of human society constrain him; they compel him to accept this duty, which he would think it wicked to neglect. It is not *wicked,* from his point of view, that innocent witnesses suffer torture in others' cases; that accused persons driven by despair make false confessions and, having been tortured for what they have not done, may finally be punished for it too; that those not subject to the death penalty may yet die under torture; that the very advocates, who have acted public-spiritedly to ensure the punishment of crime, may fail to prove their accusations in the face of lying witnesses and the stubborn denials of the accused even under torture, and so end up themselves condemned by the bamboozled judge. These many appalling miscarriages of justice are not *sins.* The wise man acting as a judge does not perpetrate them out of malice. Mistakes are unavoidable, but so is the duty of judgment, too, since human society demands it of us. Yet here, after all, is the human wretchedness we speak of, even if there is no malpractice on the bench. Or do you think that when he tortures and punishes the innocent, unable to avoid either the mistakes or the duties of a judge, he will think us mealymouthed if we merely say he is not to blame? Will he insist we call him happy, too? It would be more thoughtful, more worthy of the name of man, to acknowledge and deplore the unhappiness caused by necessary evils such as these; and, if his wisdom extends to piety, to cry to God: "Deliver me from my necessities!" (Ps. 25:17).

7. After the city, or political community, comes the *world,* following the convention that treats the household, city, and world as three successive levels of human society. Here, as in the ocean, the vast scale implies an immense expanse of dangers. In the first place differences of language alienate us from our kind. Imagine two people with no common language whose paths have crossed and who for some reason cannot go their separate ways but have to stay together: they will have greater difficulty getting on as fellow humans than dumb beasts would, even of different species.

For when we cannot communicate, our common human nature, important as it is, will not suffice; difference of language is enough to inhibit society, so that a man would rather have the company of his dog than that of a foreigner.

I shall be told that the imperial city was at pains to impose its language, not its yoke only, on the conquered races that it pacified, with the result that there was no lack of interpreters, but an abundance of them rather. True enough; but at what cost was this achieved, in constant wars of such a scale, in slaughter and the shedding of human blood! And with pacification these miseries were not over. For though foreign enemies emerged in plenty, as they still do, against whom wars continued to be waged, as they still are, a worse kind of war was engendered by the actual expansion of the empire: social and civil war, I mean, which distresses the human race much more, not only while its blaze is at its height and we wait for it to die down, but afterwards, while we live in fear that it may rekindle once again. If I were to try to pen an adequate description of the incessant and innumerable devastations, the unrelenting and unrelieved horrors of such events, I should in any case fail, and there would be no end to my discussion. But the wise man, they say, will undertake *just* wars. As though just wars will not cause him all the more grief, if he is mindful of his own humanity! If they were not just, the wise man would not have to wage them; and then he would have no wars at all. It is the wrong done by the other side that drives the wise man to just war. And even should no need for war arise, the wrong alone, since it is man's wrong, ought to inspire grief in a man's heart. Whoever, then, experiences grief as he reflects upon these vast, abominable, and cruel evils, had better acknowledge his wretchedness. Whoever experiences no grief, when they occur or when he simply contemplates them, is without doubt much more wretched; he thinks himself happy solely for want of all human sensibility!

8. There is, of course, one source of consolation in the illusions and anxieties of human society (though one not immune from that all-too-frequent delusion which cannot tell who is a friend and who is not): I mean the sincere faith and mutual affection of true and honorable friends. But what if these are dispersed in different corners of the world? The wide reach of our sympathies exposes us to fears about the vast accumulation of disasters that can befall them in this age. It is not only famines, wars, disasters, captivity, or the unimaginable horrors of slavery that may concern us. It is the gnawing fear that they may prove untrue, turn enemies, or become morally degenerate. And when we learn that this has happened, as it must sometimes do if we have many friends, the affliction of heart is something no one who has not experienced it can tell. We would prefer to hear that they were dead. To be sure, that would cause us grief enough, for how could we not mourn the death of those whose life had afforded us the solace of friendship? Disapprove of that, if you can, and you will disapprove of friendly intercourse itself; you will forbid or suppress all its affection, you will callously break off all ties of human relations or decree they must be so conducted as to empty them of their soul-penetrating sweetness! But since this cannot be, how shall we have the sweet taste of their lives without the sharp taste of their deaths? Mourning is like a wound or ulcer on the feeling heart, in need of treatment with the customary consolatory applications. That the healthy mind recovers with reasonable speed and ease, does not mean there was nothing to

recover from. Anyway, though the death of loved ones, especially those on whose services we most depend for society, brings us affliction light or grave, we would rather hear of their deaths, or see them, than of the deaths of their souls, their fall from faith or virtue. But of this extensive category of ills the earth is full, as Scripture says: "Is not man's life on the earth a temptation?" (Job 7:1), and the Lord himself: "Woe to the world for temptations to sin!" (Matt. 18:7), and again: "Because wickedness is multiplied, most men's love will grow cold" (Matt. 24:12). And so we are glad for our good friends when they die. Though the death may distress us, it also affords sure consolation; for they have been spared those evils by which even the good are exhausted in this life, or subverted, or exposed to the risk of both.

9. Moving from the world to *the universe,* including heaven, we find a fourth level of society admitted by philosophers who maintain that there is friendship between men and divine beings: that of the holy angels. These we have no cause to fear will ever hurt us by their deaths or moral decay. But they do not fraternize with us like human beings (a point itself to be mentioned among the cares of this life); while Satan, we read, may transform himself into an angel of light to tempt us, as an instruction for our good or a deception we have earned. Only the great mercy of God protects us, when we think we have the angels as our friends, from the false friendship of demons, who are dangerous, alert and deceptive enemies. Another indication of the misery of our condition, so impenetrably ignorant and susceptible to their illusions, that we should stand so wholly in need of the divine mercy! Certainly the philosophers of that ungodly city who claim divine beings as their friends have fallen into the clutches of malignant demons, by which the city is subverted as a whole and with which it will suffer everlasting punishment. What the objects of their worship are, is made plain enough by the very beings who have initiated and insisted on such vile obscenities; they have made it plain through the consecrating — or desecrating! — rites which are supposed to worship them, by the lewd games honoring their crimes which are supposed to guarantee their favor. **10.** But neither are worshipers of the one true sovereign God, though holy and faithful, immune from their illusions or from any other kind of temptation.

For even this source of disquietude serves a useful purpose for our condition of weakness in these evil days. It strengthens the determination of our quest for that security where full and certain peace is to be found. There all the attributes of our nature, the gifts, that is, that God, the creator of every natural species has endowed us with, will be not merely good but enduring, not only in the soul healed by wisdom but in the body renewed in resurrection. There our virtues will not contend against vices or evils of other kinds, but will enjoy the reward of victory, eternal peace which no enemy can destroy. There is our "final" blessedness, the end (i.e., perfection) which has no end (i.e., expiry). Yes, we are said to be happy in this life when we have some kind of peace, such as the good life may come to enjoy; but this happiness, compared with that final happiness, looks like mere wretchedness. The benefits of this peace — peace available here to mortals, if we live well, in our mortal condition — can be put to right use; the evils to which our human condition is liable when we do not have this peace can also be put to good use. It is virtuous to make use of them; but the only real virtue is that which relates everything — the benefits it

uses, the deeds it accomplishes while it makes good use of good and evil; yes, which relates even itself — to the end of that peace which could never be bettered or outdone.

11. We could say, then, that *peace* is the true "final good," as we have already said eternal life is [ch. 4, not included in this selection]. It is the city of God, the subject of our laborious exposition, which is addressed in the sacred psalm (147:12-14):

> Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem!
> Praise your God, O Zion!
> For he strengthens the bars of your gates;
> he blesses your sons within you.
> He makes peace in your borders.

When the bars of her gates are strengthened, no one will enter or leave. And so the "peace" which he makes in her borders is that final peace which is the goal of our argument. For the symbolic name of that city, Jerusalem, means "city of peace," as we have said before. But since the word "peace" is constantly used in connection with human affairs that offer anything but eternal life, we have preferred until now to speak of the ultimate state of the City of God as "eternal life" rather than of "peace," as the apostle does: "But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the return you get is sanctification and its end, eternal life" (Rom. 6:22). But, of course, the term "eternal life" is also susceptible of misunderstanding by those who are not familiar with sacred Scripture; it could be taken to mean the life of the wicked, either (as in some philosophical schools) by virtue of the immortality of the soul, or (as we believe) by virtue of the endless punishment of the wicked, who could hardly suffer torment for eternity if they were not alive for eternity. The best description, then, to avoid misunderstanding, of the end of this city in which she will possess the highest good, is either *peace in eternal life* or *eternal life in peace.*

¶

Peace is so great a good, that even in ephemeral earthly politics there is no more persuasive appeal, no more popular policy, no more valued achievement. I do not think my readers will find a short digression on the subject unwelcome; it will clarify the theme of our discussion, the end of the heavenly city, and is in any case an inviting and comforting theme in its own right.

12. I can count on the agreement of any observer, however casual, of human affairs and human nature, when I say that as there is no one who does not desire happiness, so there is no one who does not desire peace. Even those who stir up wars have victory in view; so what they hope to achieve is a peace to satisfy their vanity. Victory is simply the opponents' defeat, and when one has that, one has peace. Peace, after all, is what they have in mind, even those whose business is to master the art of war in command and engagement. It is commonly said that peace is the "choiceworthy end" of war: one makes war to secure peace, not peace to secure war. Those who wish to overthrow the peace that now obtains, do not hate peace, but want to change it to their liking. It is not peace as such that they reject, simply an-

other peace that they prefer. Even though they foment revolution against the rest of society, there is formal peace of a kind maintained among their conspirators and adherents; otherwise nothing of what they purpose would be accomplished.

Yes, even brigands need peace among associates, simply to give effect and security to their assaults on the peace of others. But imagine there were one so much stronger than the rest, so canny in his dealings with those who knew about him, as to have no need to commit himself to an associate, but could set about his depredations alone and supreme, despoiling all whom he could cow or eliminate. Even so he would need to establish a shadowy kind of peace with those whom he could not kill and from whom he kept his activities a secret. At home with his wife and children and whoever else there was he would certainly want to live in peace. When they ran at his beck and call, that would be how he liked it; when they didn't, he would be outraged, protest, inflict punishments; by all necessary means, even savagery, he would restore the peace of his household, which depended, in his view, on there being one sovereign principle, himself in his own home, to which all other functions of that household must be subordinate. Well, then, imagine he had the chance of a greater number of people to do his bidding as he liked it done at home, a whole city, say, or a nation. In that case he would not skulk in a cave as a brigand, but would mount the public stage as a king; yet his greed and wickedness would be just the same. So, then, everyone wants peace with his own, wants them, in fact, to conduct their lives as he chooses. When he makes war, it is to make his enemies his own if he can, and to impose the terms of his own peace upon them.

But let us extend our thought experiment to such a creature as we meet in poetry and myth: the "half-man" *(semihomo)* as they prefer to call him, probably because of his antisocial ferocity. His kingdom is a solitary cave in the wilderness; his malice so extraordinary that it gives him his name, Cacus (from the Greek *kakos,* "evil"); he has no wife to exchange soft sentiments with, no children to play with when they are small and instruct as they are growing up; he has no friendly conversation, not even with his father Vulcan, whose condition is so much more enviable than his own (except in the one point that *he* has not fathered such a monster!); he gives to nobody, but takes what he wants from whom he can, makes away with whom he wants when he can. Yet in his lonely cave (the floor, so we read, always warm with fresh blood!) he wants nothing more than peace: no one to trouble him, no force or threat of force to be raised against his placid existence. In sum, he wants to be at peace with his body; and the more he is so, the better he finds it. When his limbs obey his orders, when he seizes, kills, and devours his prey, appeasing urgently the revolt of his needy mortal frame, the agitation of a hunger that would sunder and expel the soul from the body; then, ferocious wild man though he is, it is peace, his own life and security, that so wildly and ferociously concerns him. We may conclude that if he would only extend to others the pursuit of peace that he maintains within his cave and in himself, no one would call him "evil," "monster," or "half-man."

(Or perhaps his savagery was imposed on him, not by desire for harm but by the need to live, his appearance and his belching of sooty flames proving too great a disincentive to association? Or perhaps he never existed, or was different from the

way artistic license has depicted him? — not improbably, since a heroic Hercules requires a demonic Cacus! Better believe that such a man ["half-man," I beg your pardon!] never existed, like so many products of poetic imagination.) The wildest beasts — as "half-beast," too, he shares *their* behavior — protect their species in a kind of peace by mating, breeding, giving birth, rearing and feeding the young; I don't mean only sheep, deer, doves, starlings, bees, and such like, but even the most unsociable and solitary, like lions, wolves, foxes, eagles, and owls. The tigress purrs affectionately over her young, laying her savagery aside in fondling them. The kite, solitary enough as he hovers above his prey, mates with his partner, builds his nest, sits on the eggs, feeds the chicks, and in partnership with the mother of his family, does his best to keep the little community in peace. The human being, even more, is induced (so to speak) by the laws of his nature to engage in society and maintain peace with all men, so far as lies with him. Even the wicked make war for the peace of those who belong to them. They would like it if they could have everyone belong to them, so that then just one man would be in command of every person and thing; but how could this be except by consent, willing or reluctant, to peace — peace, that is, on *his* terms?

In this way pride is a perverted imitation of God. It cannot tolerate association on equal terms of those who are subject to him, but must imprint the association with its own control, in place of him. It cannot tolerate the just peace of God, but prefers the unequal peace of its own devising. Yet it cannot do without loving peace of some sort. Nobody is so vicious as to take leave of nature entirely, destroying its last traces. For this reason, knowing the difference between upright and twisted, well-ordered and perverted, we do not *call* the peace which the wicked impose "peace," when we compare it with the peace of the righteous. Yet even something perverted must be at peace, subsisting in some aspect, deriving from some aspect, relating to some aspect of reality in which or from which it subsists; otherwise it could not exist at all.

To illustrate: hang a man upside down, and you have, I suppose, the body and its parts in a perverted posture. What nature wants on top is underneath, what she wants underneath is on top. So the peace of the body is disturbed, with harmful consequences. Even so, the soul is at peace with its body while it struggles to preserve it; for that is precisely the meaning of pain. If, then, the soul leaves the body under the force of this assault, there yet remains a certain peace among the bodily parts for as long as the frame retains its integrity; there is still "somebody" hanging there. And the fact that the body's mass is pulled toward the ground while held up by the rope on which it hangs, shows that it conforms to the order of its own material peace; its weight "demands" (one might say) a point of repose. Even as a lifeless, senseless object it adheres, in equilibrium or motion, to the ordered peace that is natural to it. If embalming chemicals are applied to prevent dissolution, there is a peace which holds the members together and contains the mass within appropriate spatial bounds. If this is not done, but things are left to the course of nature, it becomes unstable, emits volatile, and to our senses most unpleasant, vapors which we recognize as putrefaction, until finally it is reduced to its material elements and dispersed, slowly and bit by bit, into the peace which befits them. At no point in the process

does anything diverge from the laws of the sovereign Creator and Ordainer, by which the peace of the whole is determined. Even when grubs appear in the carcass of a larger animal, the same law takes effect: each tiny body obeys its tiny soul in the peace of its own health. And when carrion is devoured by other living things, wherever it is taken to, whatever it is joined to, whatever it is transformed and transmuted into, it finds the same laws diffused throughout the universe, making peace between matching elements to effect the welfare of each mortal species.

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13. What, then, is peace? The peace of any and every thing is the tranquillity of *order:* —

The peace of the body is the ordered functioning of its organs.
The peace of the irrational soul is the ordered satisfaction of its appetites.
The peace of the rational soul is the ordered coherence of thought and action.
The peace of the body-soul union is the ordered life and health of animal existence.
The peace of man and God is the ordered obedience of faith governed by the eternal law.

And the peace of a human community? That is *cooperative order:* —

Domestic peace is the cooperative order for giving and accepting commands among members of a household.
Civic peace is the cooperative order for giving and accepting commands among fellow citizens.
The peace of the heavenly city is the supremely cooperative, supremely ordered association of those who enjoy God and one another in God.

And what is order? It is *the disposition of all things, equal and unequal, in their appropriate positions.*

Consider the case of those who are wretched. To the extent of their wretchedness they are, of course, not at peace; they lack the tranquillity of order which nothing can disturb. But to the extent that their wretchedness is deserved, neither is it exempt from order. They are not in the same state as those who are happy; yet it is the principle of order that determines their difference of state. When they are not actually distressed, they come to terms, to a degree, with their condition, and so possess a measure of tranquillity and peace. They are still wretched, whatever their freedom from care and pain, since they are not in the position where they ought to be free of care and pain; yet they could be more wretched still if they were not at peace with the law that governs the order of nature. When, on the other hand, they undergo suffering, their peace is disturbed by suffering, yet still subsists to the extent that their suffering is not all-engulfing, and their bodily constitution is not torn apart by it. There can be life without pain, but no pain without life of a kind; peace without war, but no war without peace of a kind — not *as* war, but as waged between living beings which could not be living beings were they not constituted as such by a kind of peace.

The principle is, there are beings free of evil, free even of the possibility of evil; but a being free of good there cannot be. Not even the devil is a being evil as such; his

corruption has made him evil. That is why, though he "did not stand firm in the truth" (John 8:44), he did not escape the judgment of the truth. Though he did not remain in tranquillity of order, he did not evade the power of the Ordainer. The goodness that God gave him with his being he cannot steal away from God's righteousness which imposes order in punishing him. It is not that God assaults the good that he himself made, but the evil which the devil has done. Nor does he withdraw the good of being entirely; he withdraws a part, but leaves a part to be the seat of suffering for what has been withdrawn. Suffering itself attests that good has been withdrawn and not withdrawn. What is not withdrawn is needed for the suffering of what has been withdrawn. The sinner is in a worse state if he actually takes pleasure in the loss of his justice; to endure torment, though it acquires no good, is at least to suffer over lost salvation. And since justice and salvation are both goods, and the loss of good should be deplored rather than made a source of pleasure (assuming that there is no higher good to compensate, as justice in the soul might compensate for loss of bodily health), the offender's suffering punishment is clearly an improvement on the pleasure he first took in his offense. Pleasure in sinning, when one forsakes the good, proves that one's will is evil; suffering when good is taken away as punishment proves that one's being is good. To suffer pain at the lost peace of one's being presupposes residual elements of peace that make one's being precious to one.

So it is right that in final punishment the unrighteous and ungodly in their torments lament the loss of the goods natural to them. It is the supreme justice of God that they now experience when he takes these goods away; when he lavished them upon them, they despised his supreme generosity. God, supremely wise Creator, supremely just Ordainer of all beings, founded the race of perishable mankind, the highest of all the splendors of this earth. He gave men goods which befitted this life: temporal peace within the limits of this temporal existence, which includes health, welfare, and human society; and with it all the means necessary to safeguard and restore that peace, means appropriate and accessible to the senses, for example, such as light, sound, air to breathe, water to drink, bodily nourishment, clothing, medication, and adornment. The condition was very fair: good use of perishable goods fit for the peace of this perishable race would earn more and higher goods, imperishable peace with the glory and honor that belong to it, a life eternally devoted to enjoying God and one's neighbor in God; wrong use, on the other hand, would preclude those future blessings and entail the loss of the present ones.

14. In the earthly city, then, all use of temporal goods is related to the enjoyment of earthly peace. In the heavenly city, on the other hand, it is related to the enjoyment of eternal peace. To develop this: —

If we were irrational animals, we would seek nothing but the ordered functioning of our bodily organs and the satisfaction of our appetites; nothing, that is, but physical ease and a wealth of pleasures, so that the body's peace ensured the peace of the soul. (The irrational soul cannot enjoy peace without the body's doing so, since it is denied the satisfaction of the appetites.) These two in conjunction constitute a peace common to body and soul, the peace of ordered life and health. Animate beings show their love for the body's peace when they avoid pain; they show their love for the soul's peace when they seek pleasure in satisfying the demands of

the appetites; and they show their love for the common peace of body and soul when they shun death. But human beings have a rational soul, and all their animal behavior is subordinated to holding an object before the mind and fashioning action in accord with it. "Ordered coherence of thought and action" is how we described the peace of the rational soul. The purpose, then, for which we humans avoid the attacks of pain, the agitations of passion, and the dissolution of death, should be to acquire useful knowledge and shape our lives and habits accordingly. But this demands divine instruction and help. If through the weakness of our human minds we are not to fall victim, precisely in our search for truth, to a dangerous error, we need something to grasp with confidence and follow with freedom. Since we are "away from the Lord" in this mortal body, we walk by faith, not by sight. That is why we relate every form of peace — body's peace, soul's peace, peace of the body and soul together — to the peace uniting mortal man to immortal God: an ordered obedience of faith governed by the eternal law.

Divine instruction, furthermore, teaches us two commands above all, the love of God and neighbor. In these there are three objects for our love, God, neighbor, and self; but the only safe way of loving self is loving God. From which it follows that we must take care for our neighbor's love of God, in that he or she (wife, children, domestic servants, anyone else) is to be loved as we love ourselves; and, of course, that we desire our neighbor to take care for us, if we need it, in just the same way. By this means we shall live in peace with all men, as far as lies with us; this is *human peace,* a cooperative order of which the principle is that we harm no one and do good to whomever we can. Our first responsibility is to our family; for we have the opportunity and the access for our care provided by the arrangements of nature and society itself. So the apostle says: "If any one does not provide for his own relations, and especially for his own family, he has disowned the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (1 Tim. 5:8). At this point, then, we encounter *domestic peace,* that is to say: "the cooperative order for giving and accepting commands among members of a household." Commands are the business of those who take care: husband for wife, parents for children, masters for servants. Obedience is the responsibility of those who receive care: wives to husbands, children to parents, servants to masters.

But in the household of the just man who lives by faith, those who command really serve. Though they appear to command, their commands do not issue from a craving to dominate, but from a readiness to take care, not from a pride which asserts mastery, but from a compassionate acceptance of responsibility. **15.** This, of course, is what the arrangements of nature require; it is how God created mankind. "Let him have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air . . . , and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth" (Gen. 1:26). The rational creature made in God's image was given dominion over irrational creatures, no more: not man over man, but man over beast.

That is why God made the first righteous men shepherds of flocks, not rulers of men: to point out the difference between the system of created beings and the requirements of sin. For the state of servitude is rightly understood as a measure imposed on sinners; accordingly, we read of no servant in Holy Scripture before righteous Noah uses the word in punishing his son's sin. It was a term required by the

fact of guilt, not by nature. The Latin word is supposed to have originated in warfare, when victors spared those whom they might lawfully have killed and made slaves of them: *servus* from *servare,* to save. And that in itself implies sin and its deserts; even in just war we suffer *for* sin when we contend *against* sin; even an undeserved victory is God's judgment to humble the defeated, to correct, or perhaps to punish, their sins. Daniel, that man of God, confirms this, by confessing in captivity his own and his people's sins, admitting with contrite sorrow that they were the cause of their captivity. Sin, then, is the first cause of servitude, which binds one man in subjection to another, something arising only from God's judgment, with whom there is no unrighteousness and who knows how to assign differing punishments according to the offenders' deserts.

However, as the Lord on high says, "Everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin" (John 8:34). This is why we often see godly servants with unjust masters. For the masters are not truly free: "Whatever overcomes a man, to that is he enslaved" (2 Pet. 2:19). It is better, surely, to serve a man than a lust! Domination exercised upon the hearts of mortals by — to name but one — the lust for domination itself, is destructive. Within the terms of that true peace which consists in being subject to each other, it is a positive advantage to the servant to have a lowly status, just as it positively harms the dominating master to be proud. In nature, though, that is, as God made humankind at first, no one is servant either to man or sin. Penal servitude arises from the law which requires nature's arrangements to be protected from disturbance. Were there no offenses against that law, there would be no call for the sanction of penal servitude. This is the reason the apostle tells slaves to be subject to their masters, and to serve them with sincere goodwill. If their masters do not free them, they can make their servitude a form of freedom on their own, by serving with loyalty and love, rather than craven fear, till injustice pass away and every human principality and power be brought to nothing, so that God shall be all in all.

16. The righteous patriarchs, then, who had slaves, and in the management of their domestic economy made a distinction with regard to temporal goods between the situation of their children and their slaves, made no distinction at all when it came to worshiping God, where permanent goods are looked for; rather, they cared for every member of their household with an equal love. This practice conforms so well to the arrangements of nature that the title "father of the family," *paterfamilias,* arose from it and gained such popularity that even those who oppress their households like to be known by it. True fathers of families care for everyone in their household as regards the worship and service of God precisely as they care for their children. Their desire and wish is that they should come to the heavenly household, where there is no need for someone to give orders as there is with mortals, since in that immortal state where all are happy there will be no need for someone to take care of others. In the meantime heads of household should have more to put up with in their task than their servants have in theirs. But if any member of the household disobediently disrupts the domestic peace, he is punished — by word, or blow, or whatever form of just and fitting punishment society accepts; and this is for his own welfare, to reintegrate him into the peace that he has fallen out with. It is not kindness to cooperate in the loss of greater good, not blameless to acquiesce and to permit a slide into greater evil. The part of the blameless man is not to do no harm simply, but to restrain from sin or punish it: either the one punished will learn from his experience, or others will learn from the example.

Now, the household must be the beginning, or the cell, of the city; and every beginning relates to some end of its own kind, every part to its corresponding whole. It follows clearly enough that domestic peace relates to *civic peace;* which is to say, the cooperative order for giving and accepting commands among members of a household relates to the cooperative order for giving and accepting commands among fellow citizens. It is from the city's laws, then, that the head of the household should derive rules to govern the household in accord with the peace of the city. **17.** But a household of those who do not live by faith pursues an earthly peace based on resources and benefits of this temporal life; whereas a household of those who do live by faith looks forward to the eternal blessings promised for the future. Earthly, temporal resources it makes use of like a traveler, not held up and diverted from its journey toward God, but sustained, to support and control the burden of disintegration by which the body saps the soul. Both groups of men, then, and both types of household make use in common of the necessaries of this mortal life; but each has its own very different end in using them.

Correspondingly, the earthly city which does not live by faith aims at an earthly peace, and so fixes the terms of cooperation of its citizens in giving and accepting commands as to ensure some consensus of human wills in respect of the resources for this mortal life. The heavenly city, on the other hand, or rather that part of it which is journeying through mortality and lives by faith, needs to make use of that peace, too, until mortality, which requires that peace, is past. And so, while it leads a kind of captive existence on its journey through this earthly city, with the promise of redemption and the gift of the Spirit as its pledge, it has no scruples in conforming to the laws of the earthly city which regulate things designed for the support of mortal life. Since mortality itself is common to both, it is fitting to preserve cooperation between the two cities in mortal affairs.

But since the earthly city produced its own savants, rejected by divine teaching, who, through speculation or deceit of demons, reached the conclusion that there are many gods to be won round to support our human enterprises, each as it were with its own sphere of interest and its own function — one for the body, one for the mind; within the body one for the head, one for the neck, etc.; within the mind one for intelligence, one for learning, one for anger, one for desire; among the concerns of life one for livestock, one for grain, one for wine, one for oil, one for woodland, one for money, one for shipping, one for war and victory, one for marriage, one for childbirth and fertility, and so on and so on — and since the heavenly city knew that there was only one God to serve, and decreed, in faithful devotion, that he should be the sole object of religious service (in Greek, *latreia*) which is due to God alone; so it came about that the heavenly city could not have common religious laws with the earthly city. On this count dissension was inevitable. And that meant antagonizing those who thought differently, confronting all their resentment and anger, enduring wave after wave of persecution, except sometimes when their animosity was driven back by alarm at the city's numbers and at the help which God continually gave it.

This heavenly city, then, while on its pilgrimage on earth, calls out its citizens from every nation, and gathers a society of travelers in every linguistic community. It is not concerned what differences there may be in those morals, laws, or institutions by which earthly peace is achieved and preserved. These do not have to be abolished or destroyed; no, though different traditions prevail in different peoples, they may be protected and observed insofar as they serve the one end of earthly peace, provided they do not impede the religion which teaches the worship of the one supreme and true God. In this way the heavenly city makes use of the earthly peace on its pilgrimage here; as far as true religion and piety allow, it supports and encourages the consensus of human wills in respect of the resources for human mortal existence. It relates this earthly peace to that heavenly peace which, for rational beings at least, is the only peace worthy the name, the most perfect arrangement for the most perfectly cooperative association of those who enjoy God and one another in God. When we arrive at that point, life will be "mortal" life no more, but simply and plainly *life;* the body will be animal no more, sapping the animation of the soul as it disintegrates, but spiritual, without needs, wholly at the disposal of the will. *This* peace, meanwhile, it experiences on its pilgrimage in faith; and it lives justly by its faith when it relates to *that* peace whatever good works it performs toward God and neighbor.

Yes, the life of the city is undeniably a social life!

[. . .]

[Augustine then disposes briefly of the fourth and fifth questions. In the discussion that now follows a great deal is made of the terms *ius* and *iustitia. Ius* means "legal right," in the sense of the French *droit* or the German *Recht. Iustitia* means "justice" in a social context, "righteousness" in an individual one. So important is it, however, to retain the sense of a cognate relationship between the two, that in the following translation we have used "justice" only occasionally, to help out, and have rendered *iustitia* mainly by expressions which preserve the connection with "right."]

20. To conclude: — The supreme good of the city of God is perfect and eternal peace, not that peace through which mortals pass as they are born and die, but the peace in which those who will not die remain, without any obstacle to overcome. Who, then, can deny that that life is the most happy? or that this life which we live here, full as it may be of good things of body, soul, or circumstance, is by comparison the most unhappy? All the same, those who make use of this life to relate it to that other life as their end, those who love that life passionately and hope for it with unflinching confidence, can be said, not inappropriately, to be happy now — happy not in their present life, but in the hope they have of the future one. This life without that hope offers nothing but a pretense of happiness, which is great unhappiness. It cannot dispose of the real goods of the mind; for the so-called wisdom that is intent on this life's business, managing it prudently, coping with it resolutely, exercising temperate restraint, making just distributions, all without directing it to that end where God is all in all, where eternity is certain and peace entire, that is not real wisdom at all.

¶

21. This brings me to the point at which I must explain as briefly and as clearly as I can what I said, and promised to prove, in Book Two (2.21): that by the definitions proposed by Scipio in Cicero's *Republic* there never was a Roman commonwealth *(res publica).* His briefest definition of a "commonwealth" is "a people's wealth" *(res populi).* But if that definition is sound, there never was a Roman commonwealth because there never was a people's wealth to constitute it. For a "people" he defines as "a gathered multitude united by consent to right *(ius)* and common interest." What he means by "consent to right" he explains in the course of the discussion where he argues that a commonwealth cannot be conducted without right-dealing *(iustitia).* For where no true right-dealing obtains, there is no true right. What is done "of right" is done rightly; what is not done rightly cannot be done of right. For the term "rights" cannot be applied to the inequitable constitutions of men. They themselves have a saying that "right flows from the source of rightness"; which rejects the slogan bandied about by corrupt intellectuals, that right is what serves the interest of the most powerful.

So, then, where there is no true right-dealing, there may be no gathering united by consent to right, and so no people and no people's wealth, merely an indeterminate multitude unworthy of the name of "people." The argument, then, runs as follows: a commonwealth is a people's wealth, and there exists no right where there is no rightness, so the conclusion is irresistible that without right-dealing there is no commonwealth. But right-dealing, or justice, is the virtue of giving each his own. What "human rightness" can there be in taking man himself away from God and subjecting him to unclean demons? Is that giving each his own? To take an estate from its purchaser and to give it to someone with no title to it, is not right. Is it right to take ourselves back from our owner, God who made us, and to serve evil spirits?

To be sure, the same work, *The Republic,* contains a powerful and effective argument supporting a policy of doing right against a policy of wrongdoing. Earlier in that work the case was put by an advocate of wrong against right, that without wrongdoing the commonwealth cannot be maintained or governed. This argument took it as axiomatic that it was not right for one man to serve another; but the imperial city, the seat of the greatest commonwealth, so the argument went, had to make a policy of such wrongdoing in order to rule her provinces. In support of right the reply was made that such subjection is beneficial to such subjects, and, when imposed properly, is imposed for their benefit; that is, to deny occasions of wrongdoing to those who are minded to take them and to make subject populations better off than they were before. Reinforcing the argument with an impressive illustration from nature, he adds: "Why, then, does God command men, the mind the body, the intellect the appetite and other tendencies to vice within the mind?" Clearly the illustration shows that there are cases where subjection is beneficial, and that to serve God is beneficial to all. But it is only the mind *that serves God* that can rightly command the body; and within the mind it is the intellect *subject to the Lord God* which can command the appetite and other vices. Where man does not serve God, what rightness is there in such dispositions? One who refuses God service cannot command the body (as mind) or the vices (as intellect) rightly. And if there is no rightness in such a one, it can scarcely be doubted that a gath-

ering of men which is composed of such lacks rightness as well. Here there is none of that consent to right which will make a multitude a people, and so a commonwealth. There is no need to discuss the common interest, the other bond of unity which is supposed, according to the definition, to make a multitude a people. One could, of course, point out that on close inspection there can be no "interest" to be shared in impious lives devoted to the service not of God but of demons yet more impious, who demand in their obscenity the sacrificial worship due to gods. But what I have said about consent to right will be sufficient to show that by this definition there is no people, and so no commonwealth either, without rightness. [. . .]

24. But let us try a different definition. A people, we may say, is a gathered multitude of rational beings united by agreeing to share the things they love. Then you have a differentiated notion of a people. There can be as many different kinds of people as there are different things for them to love. Whatever those things may be, there is no absurdity in calling it a people if it is a gathered multitude, not of beasts but of rational creatures, united by agreeing to share what they love. The better the things, the better the people; the worse the things, the worse their agreement to share them. By *this* definition the Roman people is unquestionably a people and its "people's wealth" unquestionably a commonwealth. What it loved, in its early days and through succeeding generations; how it conducted itself; how it ended in bloody sedition, social and civil war, and finally the breach and dissolution of the agreement which is the basis, in one sense, of a people's continuing existence; all this is history, and we have written much about it in the preceding books. But I would not conclude from this that Rome was not a people, nor that its people's wealth was not a commonwealth; not, at any rate, while there remains some kind of gathered multitude of rational beings united by agreeing to share what they love. And what holds true for Rome and its commonwealth holds true for Athens, for any of the Greek city-states, for Egypt, for that earlier Babylon in Assyria, for every commonwealth, in fact, that held imperial sway, whether small or great; indeed, it holds true for any commonwealth of any race.

Of course, any city of pagan people, speaking generally, must lack true rightness; not obedient to God's command to refrain from sacrifice except to him, it lacks the conditions for a command of body by mind or of vice by intellect. 25. For however impressive the appearance may be of mind commanding body or intellect vice, if mind and intellect do not serve God as he commanded, the body, or vice, is not under the command that it requires. What sort of body, what sort of vice is governed by a mind ignorant of the true God and resistant to his dominion, exposed instead to the vicious and corrupting influence of demons? If the virtues which it thinks it displays in commanding body or vice are related to the acquisition or retention of any object other than God himself, they are more properly vices than virtues. Some, it is true, think that they are true and honest virtues when they are practiced for their own sake and not for something else. But in that case they are puffed up, proud virtues, and so not properly considered virtues at all, but vices. The life of the body derives not from the body itself but from something above it; similarly, the life of man derives not from man but from above man; and that is true not only of man himself but of every power he displays, every heavenly virtue. 26. The life of the body is the

soul, and the life of man — the happy life, that is — is God, as the sacred Hebrew Scriptures say: "Happy the people whose God is the Lord" (Ps. 144:15). It follows that a people alienated from that God is wretched.

Nevertheless, even such a people loves its own peace — something not to be despised, though it will not possess it at the end because it has not used it well before the end. That it should have this peace in this life in the meantime, is a matter that concerns us as well; for while the two cities are mingled together, we, too, make use of the peace of Babylon. By faith the people of God is freed from it, yet pursuing a traveler's existence in its sphere in the meantime. That is why the apostle counseled the church to pray for its kings and authorities, adding explicitly, "that we may live a quiet and peaceable life with all godliness and love" (1 Tim. 2:2). The prophet Jeremiah, too, in telling God's ancient people of their captivity and commanding them in God's name to go obediently to Babylonia and serve their God there precisely by their patience, instructed them to pray for it: "because in its peace is your peace" (Jer. 29:7). He meant, of course, the temporal peace of the meantime which is shared by good and wicked alike; (27) though our own proper peace, peace with God, is experienced here by faith, too, and not only by sight in eternity.

Yet no peace here, whether that shared peace or our own proper peace, can be more than a solace to unhappiness. There is yet no delighting in happiness. Our righteousness, too, "truly right" as it may be on account of the truly good end to which it relates, is in this life no more than forgiven sin. There is yet no perfection of virtue. The proof of this lies in that prayer which the whole of God's city makes use of while it journeys on earth, crying out through every member to God, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us" (Matt. 6:12). This prayer is not for those whose faith is without works and so dead; it is for those whose faith works through love. For even the intellect subject to God does not have a perfect command over vice, since in this mortal state the soul is deprived of its vigour by the disintegrating body, even the righteous stand in need of such a prayer.

Translation: Editors, from Bibliothèque Augustinienne.